BAMPFA Commissions Monumental Art Wall From Carlos Amorales

On View March 27—October 13, 2019

_Ghost Demonstration_ Highlights Historical and Recent Protest Movements in Berkeley and UK

(Berkeley, CA) March 18, 2019—The UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) has commissioned the celebrated artist Carlos Amorales to create a monumental site-specific installation for the museum’s 30-by-63-foot Art Wall. The latest installment in BAMPFA’s ongoing Art Wall series, _Ghost Demonstration_ draws on the tradition of socially conscious mural art from Amorales’s native Mexico to capture histories of radical protest actions in Great Britain and the United States—including historical and recent demonstrations in Berkeley.

Born and raised in Mexico City, Amorales has exhibited widely in the United States and Europe, where his installation for the Mexican Pavilion at the 2017 Venice Biennale was met with great acclaim. Working with a wide range of media, the artist has spent the past three decades exploring themes of language and communication through his practice, in forms ranging from animation and video art to live performance and more. Amorales’s BAMPFA commission extends this theme by reimagining Berkeley protest posters from the 1960s, when the city emerged as a nexus of left-wing political and social movements. These slogans and signifiers are depicted in the mural alongside more recent
protest language from Berkeley demonstrations over the past decade, as well as lyrics of British Anarcho-punk bands from 1980s who opposed Thatcher-era neoliberal policies.

For Ghost Demonstration, Amorales has spray-painted dozens of stencils of these posters and lyrics onto large boards that are mounted onto BAMPFA’s Art Wall, creating a composite grid of protest that spans the two-story entry space. The work also depicts stenciled human figures, alluding to the activists past and present who exercise their free speech rights. The work’s visual aesthetic further draws from Mexico’s vibrant history of murals and avant-garde art movements from the first half of the twentieth century, suggesting continuity between the emerging political art of that earlier era with the political protest actions of the recent past.

Inspired by Berkeley’s vivid history of activism, Amorales has selected more than a dozen phrases collected from archival images of demonstrations, photos of posters, and recent imagery culled from the Internet. The language that appears in Ghost Demonstration is deeply rooted in specific historical moments, even as the text often transcends its origins to resonate across disparate eras. This process of reassembling the language of past histories into new forms of communication is characteristic of Amorales’s practice, which explores the potential for art to reshape historical modes of transmission.

“With Ghost Demonstration, we see Carlos Amorales integrating his interest in counterculture movements with the history of avant-garde developments in Mexico that were motivated by more populist interests of a new political regime seeking to reconnect with its people,” said Apsara DiQuinzio, BAMPFA’s curator of modern and contemporary art and Phyllis C. Wattis MATRIX Curator. “The ghostly outlines of the human figure point to historically significant moments in time and in diverse cultures, while, in combination with the slogans, reinforcing the urgent need for remaining socially and politically engaged in the present.”

Ghost Demonstration marks the sixth installment in BAMPFA’s Art Wall series, which began with the inauguration of its new Diller Scofidio + Renfro-designed building in early 2016. Amorales’s Art Wall commission follows that of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, the Bay Area artist and graphic designer whose work was on view at BAMPFA from August 2018 through March 2019.

On Wednesday, March 27 at 6 p.m., Amorales appears at BAMPFA in conversation with DiQuinzio to discuss his artistic practice and the historical legacy of Mexican muralism and political protest art. The conversation is free with museum admission.

About Carlos Amorales

Some of his most important exhibitions include: Axioms for Action, MUAC—Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City (2018); Herramientas de trabajo, MAMM—Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín, Colombia (2017); Prelude, Bellas Artes Projects Outpost, Manila, Philippines (2017); Carlos Amorales, Turku Art Museum, Finland (2016); We Will See How Everything Reverberates, as part of The Dual Year of the United Kingdom and Mexico, Turner Contemporary, Margate, United Kingdom (2015); The Man Who Did All Things Forbidden, Philadelphia Museum of Art, United States (2014); Germina, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2013); Supprimer, modifier et préserver, MAC/VAL, Vitry-sur-Seine, France (2011); Discarded Spider, Cornerhouse, Manchester, United Kingdom (2010); Working Class Today... Mañana Nuevos Ricos!, Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany (2009); Dark Mirror, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2008); Faces, The Moore Space, Miami (2007); Carlos Amorales, Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, Argentina.
Carlos Amorales represented Mexico at the fifty-seventh Venice Biennial with the project Life in the Folds (2017). His work has been part of other biennials such as the tenth Shanghai Biennale, China (2015); 2 and 8 Berlin Biennial (2001 and 2014); Sharjah Biennial 11, United Arab Emirates (2013); the tenth and twelfth Bienal de la Habana, Havana, Cuba (2015 and 2009); fifth SeMA Biennale Mediacity Seoul, South Korea (2008); and second Moscow International Biennale of Contemporary Art (2007).

Carlos Amorales lives and works in Mexico City.

**Thanks**

Art Wall: Carlos Amorales is organized by Apsara DiQuinzio, BAMPFA’s curator of modern and contemporary art and Phyllis C. Wattis MATRIX Curator. The Art Wall is commissioned by BAMPFA and made possible with major funding from Frances Hellman and Warren Breslau.

**Above**


**Visitor Information**

Address
2155 Center Street, Berkeley, CA 94720

Hours
Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

$13 general admission

$11 non-UC Berkeley students, disabled, 65+

FREE BAMPFA members; UC Berkeley students, faculty, staff; 18 & under; one adult per child 13 & under

Information
bampfa.org

(510) 642-0808

**Social Media**

facebook.com/bampfa
twitter.com/bampfa
instagram.com/bampfa

#bampfa | #bampfafa | @bampfa

**About BAMPFA**

An internationally recognized arts institution with deep roots in the Bay Area, the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) is a forum for cultural experiences that transform individuals and advance the local, national, and global discourse on art and film. BAMPFA is UC Berkeley’s premier visual arts venue, presenting more than 450 film screenings, scores of public programs, and more than twenty exhibitions annually. With its vibrant and eclectic programming, BAMPFA inspires the imagination and ignites critical dialogue through art, film, and other forms of creative expression.

The institution’s collection of more than 25,000 works of art dates from 3000 BCE to the present day and includes important holdings of Neolithic Chinese ceramics, Ming and Qing Dynasty Chinese
painting, Old Master works on paper, Italian Baroque painting, early American painting, Abstract Expressionist painting, contemporary photography, and Conceptual art. BAMPFA's collection also includes more than 17,500 films and videos, including the largest collection of Japanese cinema outside of Japan, impressive holdings of Soviet cinema, West Coast avant-garde film, and seminal video art, as well as hundreds of thousands of articles, reviews, posters, and other ephemera related to the history of film.