

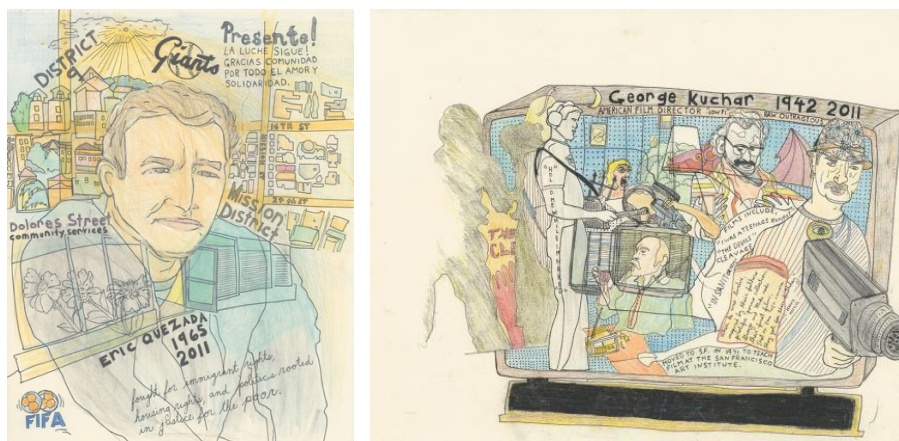
PRESS RELEASE

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BAMPFA Mounts First Comprehensive Presentation of *Memorial Drawings* by Veronica De Jesus

On View October 25, 2017–February 26, 2018

239-Drawing Series Includes Tributes to Many Bay Area Community Members



(Berkeley, CA) September 6, 2017—This fall, a series of 239 drawings by the contemporary artist Veronica De Jesus, who has deep roots in the Bay Area, receives its first comprehensive presentation at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive ([BAMPFA](http://bampfa.org)). Created between 2004 and 2016, the *Memorial Drawings* series commemorates the lives of artists, writers, and other notable individuals—including both internationally prominent figures and local community members in the Bay Area, where De Jesus lived prior to her move to Los Angeles in 2016. The latest installment in BAMPFA's [MATRIX Program](#)—which introduces Bay Area audiences to exceptional voices in contemporary art—[Veronica De Jesus / MATRIX 268](#) is the artist's first solo museum exhibition.

A graduate of UC Berkeley's MFA program and the San Francisco Art Institute, De Jesus (b. 1970) has been a prominent fixture in the Bay Area arts scene for the past three decades. During that time, she has been widely noted for her work with artists with disabilities, including at The Lighthouse for the Blind in San Francisco and National Institute for Adults with Disabilities in Richmond. In 2004, she began what eventually became the *Memorial Drawings* series with portraits of the chef Julia Child and the Polish poet Czesław Miłosz, created shortly after their deaths; the series quickly expanded to include a wide range of recently deceased creative figures, including the artist's friends and community members. Her subjects range from household names like Michael Jackson and Roger Ebert

to unsung Bay Area personalities such as Mission District Community Organizer Eric Quezada and Campbell Soup Factory Employee Robert Thiereff. The style of the portraits varies from austere black-and-white sketches to intricately detailed color drawings, often including quotations or distinctive iconography from the subject's life.

Over the years, many images from the *Memorial Drawings* series have been displayed in the windows of San Francisco's Dog Eared Books, where De Jesus worked and where her drawings became known as a focal point for loss and remembrance within the neighborhood's rapidly gentrifying community. In conjunction with the artist's MATRIX exhibition, the *Memorial Drawings* series is being published in the book, [*People are a light to Love*](#) (Rite Editions), available at the BAMPFA Store. De Jesus returns to the Bay Area this fall, during which she presents an [artist's talk](#) at BAMPFA on Wednesday, October 25 at 12 p.m.

"It's a great pleasure to present the first solo museum exhibition of an artist who has contributed so much to the vibrancy of the arts in the Bay Area. Veronica's work has much to tell us about how artists can belong, and contribute, to their community," said BAMPFA Director and Chief Curator Lawrence Rinder. "This presentation of Veronica's remarkable *Memorial Drawings* series reflects BAMPFA's aspiration to be a cultural town square, a place of intersection, connection, and engagement."

"The eclectic scope of the *Memorial Drawings* series speaks to Veronica's profoundly humanistic approach to the act of memorialization, which presents each individual's life is worthy of recognition," said Apsara DiQuinzio, BAMPFA's curator of modern and contemporary art and Phyllis C. Wattis MATRIX curator. "This theme of universal human value is central to Veronica's artistic practice—including her work with disabled artists in the Bay Area—and invites us to reflect on both the lives of her individual subjects and on broader themes of community, memory, and generosity, in a time marked by political divisiveness."

Support

Veronica De Jesus / MATRIX 268 is organized by Apsara DiQuinzio, curator of modern and contemporary art and Phyllis C. Wattis MATRIX Curator, with Matthew Coleman, curatorial assistant. The MATRIX Program is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Wattis and the continued support of the BAMPFA Trustees.

Above

- 1) Veronica De Jesus: *Eric Quezada*, 2011; color pens on paper; 13 5/8 x 10 in.; courtesy of the artist.
- 2) Veronica De Jesus: *George Kuchar*, 2011; mixed media on paper; 10 15/16 x 13 5/8 in.; courtesy of the artist.

Visitor Information

Address

2155 Center Street, Berkeley, CA 94720

Hours

Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Information

bampfa.org

(510) 642-0808

Gallery Admission

\$12 general admission

\$10 non-Berkeley students, disabled, 65+

Free for BAMPFA members; UC Berkeley students, faculty, staff, and retirees; 18 & under + one adult

Free First Thursdays: Free gallery admission on the first Thursday of each month

Social Media

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About MATRIX

The MATRIX Program for Contemporary Art introduces the Bay Area community to exceptional work being made internationally, nationally, and locally, creating a rich connection to the current dialogues on contemporary art and demonstrating that the art of this moment is vital, dynamic, and often challenging. Confronting traditional practices of display and encouraging new, open modes of analysis, MATRIX provides an experimental framework for an active interchange between the artist, the museum, and the viewer. There have been hundreds of shows at BAMPFA since the program's inception in 1978.

Over more than thirty years MATRIX has featured artists such as John Baldessari, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Louise Bourgeois, Sophie Calle, Nan Goldin, Eva Hesse, Sol LeWitt, Shirin Neshat, Nancy Spero, and Andy Warhol. In recent years MATRIX has embraced a greater international scope, with the roster including Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Peter Doig, Omer Fast, Tobias Rehberger, Ernesto Neto, Rosalind Nashashibi, Tomás Saraceno, Mario García Torres, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul, representing countries as diverse as Finland, Germany, Iran, Mexico, Thailand, Brazil, and many others.

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 up to 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 19,000 works of art dates from 3,000 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, seminal video art, as well as hundreds of thousands of articles, reviews, posters, and other ephemera related to the history of film.