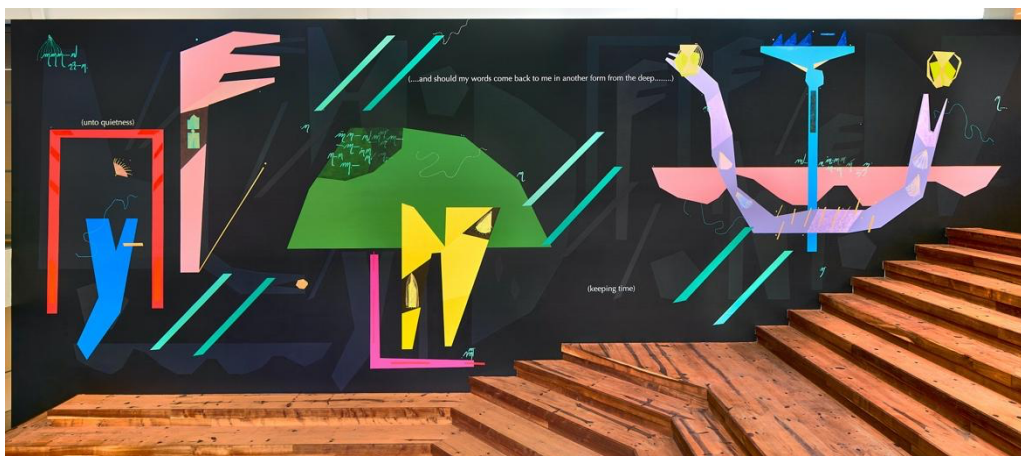


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BAMPFA Commissions Site-Specific Mural from Caroline Kent

On View through October 30

Large-Scale Abstract Mural on BAMPFA's Art Wall Marks Kent's First Site-Specific Installation on the West Coast



(Berkeley, CA) May 4, 2022—The UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) has commissioned a site-specific mural from the Chicago-based artist Caroline Kent, which will occupy the museum's entry space through October 30. Kent's massive abstract mural *The Sounds Among Us* will fill the entirety of BAMPFA's Art Wall, a 30-by-63-foot space that is dedicated to presenting large-scale work by leading contemporary artists. The mural marks Kent's first major site-specific installation in a West Coast museum and is the largest work that the artist has completed to date.

Described by Kent as "a musical notation for everyday sounds", the Art Wall installation invites visitors to experience the work as a visual accompaniment to the nuanced soundscape of footsteps, conversation, and street noise that intermingle throughout BAMPFA's Crane Forum on a daily basis. Shadowed forms pass through veiled layers of black ground, never fully reaching the surface. The colorful geometric shapes that emerge hint at recognizable forms that skirt the edges of representation. These shapes are arranged to evoke a sense of rhythmic interplay, guiding the spectator's eye in a variegated zigzag across the wall, interspersed with short poetic phrases like "...and should my words come back to me in another form from the deep...". These inclusions mark the first time that Kent has incorporated text into her colorful abstract paintings with black backgrounds.

The Sounds Among Us features a notable break from Kent's past work enabled by the monumental size of the piece: the mural's base layer comprises a conglomeration of shapes in varying tones of black, which subtly interweave to add a new dimension of texture that deepens with proximity to the work. The mural is also unusual for Kent's practice in its horizontal, rather than vertical, orientation, offering viewers an expanded horizon that calls to mind the visual layout of musical notes on a stanza.

One of the few Black Latinx artists working in contemporary abstract painting, Kent has described her work to the *New York Times Style Magazine* as "confronting" an abstract art canon that is "almost void of Black and brown voices." Based in Chicago since 2017, Kent has exhibited at numerous galleries and museums in the Midwest and New York City, including at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago where an immersive installation of her work is currently on view through June 12. Her works are held in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, DePaul Art Museum, and Walker Art Center, as well as the collection of BAMPFA—which recently acquired a painting by Kent at the recommendation of David Huffman, one of four artist-curators of the museum's current exhibition *The Artist's Eye*, who selected Kent's *A State of Suspension* (2018) for inclusion in his curated selection.



In conjunction with Kent's Art Wall presentation, BAMPFA will host a workshop for families on Saturday, June 11 at 11:30 a.m. led by the artist Marcela Florez, which will invite participants to create their own "sound pictures" inspired by the architectural features of BAMPFA's building. BAMPFA has also commissioned an essay on Kent's work by the Chicago-based writer Camille Bacon, which is available in printed form in the Crane Forum and as a PDF on the museum's website. A video interview with Kent conducted by BAMPFA Director Julie Rodrigues Widholm will be posted online in the coming days; visit bampfa.org for the latest updates.

"It's important for museums to offer artists opportunities that push and stretch their work in new directions and BAMPFA's Art Wall is an exciting space for this," said Widholm, who curated the exhibition with assistance from BAMPFA Chief Curator Christina Yang. "I'm thrilled to introduce Caroline's work to Bay Area audiences. It's simultaneously beautiful, conceptual, and critical in its approach to abstract painting with allusions to sound, music composition, and film set against a multilayered black ground. Her work rigorously enhances our ongoing exploration of the legacy of abstract painting at BAMPFA."

Sponsorship

The Art Wall is commissioned by BAMPFA and made possible by major funding from Frances Hellman and Warren Breslau.

Image credits

1. *The Sounds Among Us* (2022), installation view. Photo by Impart Photography.
2. Portrait of Caroline Kent, courtesy of the artist.

Visitor Information

Subject to change based on COVID-19 protocols: visit bampfa.org/visit/plan-your-visit for current information.

Hours

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

Tickets

\$14 general admission

\$12 non-UC Berkeley students, disabled, 65+

FREE BAMPFA members; UC Berkeley students, faculty, staff; 18 and under; one adult per child 13 and under; and artists in the BAMPFA collection/MATRIX

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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 fifteen 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 28,000 works of art encompasses pieces dating from 3000 BCE to the present day and includes important holdings of Ming and Qing Dynasty Chinese painting, Japanese paintings and woodblock prints of the Edo period, Indian miniatures, 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 18,000 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.