



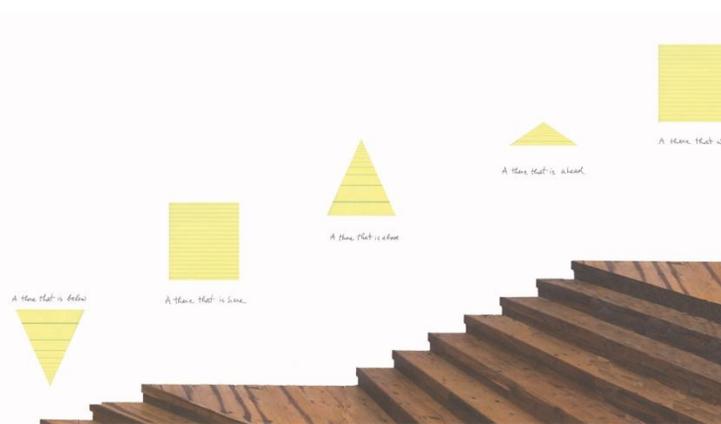
PRESS RELEASE

Media Contact: A. J. Fox · (510) 642-0365 · afox@berkeley.edu

BAMPFA Commissions New Site-Specific Work by Luis Camnitzer

On View November 30, 2022 through May 31, 2023

Large-Scale Conceptual Artwork *below/here/above/ahead/was* Marks the First Solo Presentation on the West Coast

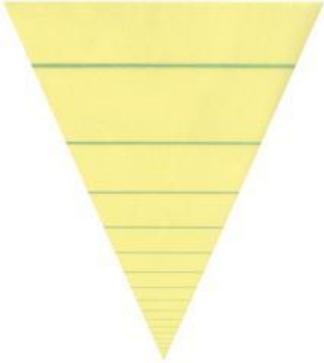


(Berkeley, CA) October 13, 2022—The UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) has commissioned a large-scale, site-specific wall work by Luis Camnitzer that will be inaugurated in the museum’s entry space this fall, marking a rare West Coast presentation for one of the leading figures of the Latin American Conceptual art movement. For his BAMPFA commission, Camnitzer has created a text-based work that visually responds to the steps of BAMPFA’s Crane Forum, an interior amphitheater adjacent to the museum’s entrance. Entitled *below/here/above/ahead/was*, it appears on BAMPFA’s Art Wall, a 30-by-63-foot space that is dedicated to presenting large-scale work by leading contemporary artists.

Drawing on Camnitzer’s longtime interest in the application of language as sociopolitical intervention, *below/here/above/ahead/was* features large vinyl stickers resembling lined yellow notepaper, inflected by cryptic phrases in the artist’s own handwriting that direct viewers’ attention to their changing visual perspectives as they move through the space. The text interludes read as follows: *a there that is below / a there that is here / a there that is above / a there that is ahead / a there that was*.

In both its text and visual geometry, the work responds to the interior architecture of BAMPFA’s six-year-old facility, which was designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro to create intersecting sightlines across different floors throughout the museum. *Below/here/above/ahead/was* joins other recent BAMPFA Art Wall presentations of text-based works, including past commissions from Caroline Kent (2022), Luchita Hurtado (2020), Carlos Amoraes (2019), and Lawrence Weiner (2017).

A there that is below



A German-born Uruguayan artist and critic, Camnitzer has been at the forefront of Latin American Conceptual art for the past six decades. As the *New York Times* noted in a review of his 2011 survey at El Museo del Barrio, Camnitzer was one of the first postwar Conceptual artists to use printed language as an artistic medium, years before North American Conceptualists like Weiner and others became famous for doing so. Camnitzer's practice is distinguished from these contemporaries in part by his politically charged use of language to explore themes of colonialism, capitalism, and institutional critique, promoting alternative understandings of center and periphery in both the art world and society at large. These topics have long been at the center of Camnitzer's practice as both an artist and scholar—including in his highly influential book *Conceptualism in Latin American Art* (2007), which will be available in BAMPFA Store during the Art Wall presentation.

In conjunction with the new Art Wall, Camnitzer will deliver an artist's talk via Zoom on Thursday, March 9. BAMPFA is also publishing an interview with Camnitzer that was conducted by the museum's former chief curator Christina Yang and will be available in brochure form adjacent to the Art Wall. Additional public and educational programs related to the Art Wall will be announced in the coming weeks; visit bampfa.org for the latest updates.

"We're thrilled to bring the poetic yet political work of Luis Camnitzer to the West Coast for his first solo presentation. This new work unites BAMPFA's longstanding commitment to Conceptual art with our more recent focus on Latinx art—particularly work by those artists and movements that have been historically underrecognized in US museums," said BAMPFA's Executive Director Julie Rodrigues Widholm. "It's an honor to provide one of the leading Conceptual artists of his generation the space to expand his distinctive practice, which is very much in line with how we want the Art Wall to provide opportunities to help artists evolve their work in new directions."

Sponsorship

Art Wall: Luis Camnitzer is organized by BAMPFA staff and curated by Christina Yang, former chief curator. The Art Wall is made possible by major funding from Frances Hellman and Warren Breslau.

Image credits

1. Luis Camnitzer: *below/here/above/ahead/was*, conceptual mockup.
2. Luis Camnitzer: *below/here/above/ahead/was*, conceptual detail.

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

Address

2155 Center Street, Berkeley, CA 94720
bampfa.org
510-642-0808

About BAMPFA

One of the nation's leading university museums, 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. As the premier visual arts venue at the leading U.S. public research university, BAMPFA is uniquely dedicated to art and film in equal measure, presenting more than four hundred film screenings, dozens of public programs, and more than fifteen exhibitions annually.

BAMPFA takes a contemporary and critical perspective on its wide-ranging collections. The museum's holdings of more than 28,000 works of art include particular strengths in 20th- and 21st-century work, including Abstract Expressionist painting, contemporary photography, conceptual art, and African American quilts, along with focused historical collections of 19th-century American folk art and early American painting, Italian Baroque painting, Old Master works on paper, and East Asian paintings. BAMPFA's collection also includes more than 18,000 films and videos, representing the largest collection of Japanese cinema outside of Japan and 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.

Founded as the University Art Museum in 1970 and initially housed in a Brutalist structure designed by Mario Ciampi, BAMPFA relocated in 2016 to a new purpose-built facility designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro in the heart of downtown Berkeley. The museum's curatorial strategies reflect the rich diversity of the UC Berkeley campus and the greater Bay Area through programming that is interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and international in scope. A locally connected, globally relevant institution, BAMPFA is deeply dedicated to its role as an educational space for UC Berkeley scholars and the general public. It fulfills this mission with three distinguished study centers—the James Cahill Asian Art Study Center, the Film Library and Study Center, and the Florence Helzel Works on Paper Study Center—as well as a range of collaborations with the university's academic departments and student organizations.