UC Berkeley’s 2017 MFA Graduates Unveil New Works at BAMPFA

On View May 17–June 11, 2017

47th Annual MFA Exhibition Showcases Next Generation of Artistic Voices

(Berkeley, CA) May 9, 2017—The UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) will showcase the work of six graduating students from UC Berkeley’s Department of Art Practice with its 47th Annual Master of Fine Arts Graduate Exhibition. The exhibition marks the first time for all but one of these students to have their work presented in a museum setting, offering BAMPFA visitors an early opportunity to discover new work by six promising artists. On view from May 17 through June 11, the exhibition coincides with a satellite show by the artists at the Right Window Gallery in San Francisco’s Mission District.

For the past two years, the six artists—Takming Chuang, Lucas DeGiulio, Behnaz Khaleghi, Shari Paladino, Jovi Schnell, and Andrew Wilson—have refined their creative practices as students at one of America’s most highly rated universities. Working with BAMPFA Assistant Curator Stephanie Cannizzo and Curatorial Assistant Matthew Coleman, the graduates are contributing works that reflect their own unique voices, united by their shared interest in spectatorship and the social construction of identity. As participants in BAMPFA’s annual MFA graduate exhibition, the students join a distinguished roster of previous UC Berkeley MFA graduates such as Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Enrique Chagoya, and Shirin Neshat, artists who went on to international recognition after first presenting their work at BAMPFA.
“We are excited to present new works by these remarkable artists, who have shown such incredible creativity and accomplishment during their time at Cal,” said BAMPFA Director and Chief Curator Curator Lawrence Rinder. "Our annual commitment to showcasing the work of UC Berkeley’s exceptionally talented MFA graduates reflects the continuing vitality of BAMPFA’s relationship to its vibrant university community.”

The opening of the MFA Graduate exhibition will be marked by an artists’ talk with the six participating students on Wednesday, May 17 at 6 p.m. The talk is free with museum admission and will be followed immediately by a reception for BAMPFA members from 7 to 9 p.m. Descriptions of each artist’s work follow below:

**Takming Chuang**

Takming Cheng’s ceramic sculptures recall the elasticity and wrinkled texture of human skin, evoking the artist’s interest in corporeal transience and the anxiety of change. His crumpled sculptural forms are made from unfired clay that has been wrapped in plastic to prolong its malleable state, resulting in anti-utilitarian “containers” whose inability to support weight or conceal their contents further references the impermanence of their form.

(***Fiona**, 2017; unfired clay and plastic wrap; 7 ½ x 29 ½ x 13 in.; courtesy of the artist.)

**Lucas DeGiulio**

Lucas DeGiulio creates works from objects found during wilderness excursions, which he assembles into abstract sculptures and collages—including animal masks for his young son—that reflect the fluidity and dynamism of the ecosystems from which they are drawn. Many of his works also incorporate non-natural elements such as neon paint and transparent plastic sheets, creating a deliberate tension between source materials that mirrors the works’ balance between interiority and external forms.

(***Untitled**, 2017; plastic, dirt, wood; 15 X 16 in.; courtesy of the artist.)

**Behnaz Khaleghi**

Behnaz Khaleghi’s work employs scatological humor and phallic structures to explore male anxieties about women. Her installations often include a recurring motif of a turban, hinting at the Iranian-born artist’s interest in the intersection of gender with the Islamophobic currents of post-9/11 society. The MFA exhibition will include her multimedia installation *In Heaven*, which immerses viewers in a circus-like environment of video, painting, and soft sculpture centered on a massive female figure that appears to be giving birth.

(*In Heaven*, 2017 (detail); mixed media; dimensions variable; courtesy of the artist.)
**Shari Paladino**

Shari Paladino’s immersive sets offer a facsimile of domestic interior spaces as a backdrop for exploring themes of nostalgia, self-definition, racial identity, and belonging. The MFA exhibition will include Paladino’s *Habitas*, an installation based on 1970s and ’80s sitcom sets, whose wryly self-referential designs speak to the ways in which television shapes and conditions collective understanding of race, gender, and disability. (*Habitas*, 2017 (in process); sculpture installation with video component; dimensions variable; courtesy of the artist.)

**Jovi Schnell**

Jovi Schnell paints kaleidoscopic systems that draw on subject matter as diverse as plant intelligence, cybernetics, philosophy, and her own “nontraditional” upbringing on a queer feminist homestead in Arkansas’s Ozark Mountains. Her large-scale canvasses present psychedelic ecosystems of intersecting colors and forms, which strive toward a harmonious balance between speculative thinking and scientific truth. (*Space Hansa Prismatica*, 2017; acrylic and Flashe on canvas; 78 x 58 in.; courtesy of the artist.)

**Andrew Wilson**

Working with jewelry, sculpture, textiles, photography, and book arts, Andrew Wilson explores narratives of Black and queer identities over the course of American history. An Oakland-based artist with a keen interest in the commodification of Black bodies, Wilson created his own fashion line, *FRUIT*, which explicitly references the economics and human toll of American slavery—including an outfit adorned with over 2,000 cast brass cowrie shells modeled on the indigenous currency that was once used by West African slave traders. (*Crown*, from *#FRUIT Fashion Show*, 2017; performance; courtesy of the artist. Photo by Josh Egel.)
Support
The 47th Annual University of California, Berkeley Master of Fine Arts Graduate Exhibition is organized by Assistant Curator Stephanie Cannizzo and Curatorial Assistant Matthew Coleman. The annual MFA exhibition is made possible by the Barbara Berelson Wiltsek Endowment.

Lead Images
1) Behnaz Khaleghi: In Heaven, 2017 (detail); mixed-media installation; dimensions variable; courtesy of the artist.
2) Shari Paladino: Cuckoo, 2016; walnut; 12 x 5 in.; courtesy of the artist.
3) Jovi Schnell: Rosaniline Momenta, 2017; acrylic and Flashe on canvas; 78 x 58 in.; courtesy of the artist.

Visitor Information
Address
2155 Center Street, Berkeley, CA 94704
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

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About BAMPFA
Internationally recognized for its art and film programming, the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) is a platform for cultural experiences that transform individuals, engage communities, and advance the local, national, and global discourse on art and film. BAMPFA is UC Berkeley’s primary visual arts venue with screenings of some 450 films and presentations of up to twenty exhibitions annually. BAMPFA’s mission is to inspire the imagination and ignite critical dialogue through art and film.

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.