

New Exhibition from BAMPFA's Collection Showcases Nearly a Dozen Recent Acquisitions for the First Time



On View from September 10, 2025 through July 12, 2026

Object Oriented: Abstraction and Design in the BAMPFA Collection Explores How Artists Reimagine Familiar Objects from Everyday Life

(Berkeley, CA) August 12, 2025—The Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive will open a major survey of its celebrated art collection, with a special focus on artworks that engage with notions of abstraction and design in everyday life. On view for nearly a full year, *Object Oriented: Abstraction and Design in the BAMPFA Collection* will encompass a selection of roughly fifty artworks from BAMPFA's holdings, including nearly a dozen recent acquisitions that will go on view for the first time. Featuring painting and sculpture as well as maquettes, photography, and

artist's books, *Object Oriented* will invite viewers to reflect on the complex relationship between form and function.

The artworks in *Object Oriented* are primarily drawn from the mid-twentieth century through the present, in addition to select works from earlier periods that complement the exhibition's thematic focus—such as a gilt-wood proscenium created by the Berkeley-based artist Sargent Johnson in 1937, which was brought into BAMPFA's collection last year. Johnson's *Proscenium*, which was displayed last year at the Huntington Library, is one of eleven recently acquired artworks that will be featured in the exhibition, most of which will go on view for the first time. Other notable works in the exhibition that have recently entered BAMPFA's collection include *Untitled (Tire/Wheel)* (2017), an abstract sculpture by Ann Greene Kelly made from commercially sourced plastic chairs; *Figure/Chair* (2023), a series of diazotype photo prints by Barbara Kasten; and a set of three small-scale sculptures by the San Francisco-based artist Ron Nagle.

Many of the artworks in *Object Oriented* do not depict or even suggest a discrete object per se but instead emphasize their materiality, foregrounding an exploration of color, shape, pattern, and texture. While some of the works resemble familiar items—whether furniture, books, or a tire—these are not objects without any clear or specific purpose. The latter half of the exhibition centers on several pieces that were, at one point, functional, but have been rendered



abstract outside their original context—such as architectural reliefs brought into a new building.

Object Oriented continues BAMPFA’s recent practice of mounting thematically organized exhibitions from its 25,000-work collection, which encompasses a diversity of global cultures and focused special collections from historical periods. Today, the collection is especially well known for its strength in art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including notable holdings in conceptual art by West Coast artists. Many of the recent acquisitions featured in *Object Oriented* reflect and advance this area of focus, including work by Tammy Rae Carland, Fiona Connor, Sara Siestroom, and Charlene Tan, among others.

In conjunction with *Object Oriented*, BAMPFA will mount a series of public programs that engage some of the living artists whose work is featured in the exhibition. On Thursday, September 11 at 6 PM, BAMPFA’s Senior Curator Anthony Graham will moderate a [panel discussion](#) at the museum with the artists CrossLypka, Vincent Fecteau, and Léonie Guyer, who will reflect on how their respective practices represent and reshape familiar everyday objects. Additional programs will occur throughout the exhibition’s ten-month presentation; visit bampfa.org for the latest updates.

“In many ways, the artworks in this exhibition have an uncanny ability to change just by the way we look at them,” said Graham, who curated *Object Oriented*. “Confounding our assumptions about functionality or usefulness, these artworks prompt us to think seriously about all of the meanings and associations through form, color, and shape. What might we learn about ourselves by reorienting the way we relate to the objects, whether artworks in a museum or furniture in our daily lives?”

About BAMPFA

Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) ignites cultural change for a more inclusive and artistic world. BAMPFA has been uniquely dedicated to art and film since 1970, with international programming that is locally connected and globally relevant. It holds more

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than 25,000 artworks and 18,000 films and videos in its collection, with particular strengths in modern and contemporary art and historical Chinese painting, as well as the world's largest collection of African American quilts. As part of the University of California, Berkeley, BAMPFA is committed to artistic diversity through its robust slate of art exhibitions, film screenings, artist talks, live performances, and educational programs that shed new light on the art of the past and connect our audiences with leading filmmakers and artists of our time. BAMPFA sits on the edge of campus and downtown Berkeley, where it welcomes visitors from across and beyond the Bay Area in a repurposed building designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro.

Image credits

1. Sara Siestreem, *i love you lucille ball*, 2015–2022; acrylic, graphite, color pencil, and Xerox transfer on 45 panel boards; 16 x 16 in. each; 88 x 144 in. overall; BAMPFA Collection, museum purchase with funds donated by Dr. Janet Mohle-Boetani and Mark Manasse, Sara Miller Meigs, and the Greg & Cathy Tibbles Fund of OCF, 2024.8.
2. Anne Greene Kelly: *Untitled (Tire/Wheel)*, 2017; plastic chairs, resin, wire, hardware, plaster, aluminum, graphite, and colored pencil; 31 x 32 x 14 in.; BAMPFA Collection, purchase made possible through a gift of the Buddy Taub Foundation, Dennis A. Roach and Jill Roach, Directors, 2017.64.

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