

BAMPFA Mounts Major Retrospective of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

On View from January 24 through April 19, 2026

***Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Multiple Offerings* Features Lesser Known and Previously Unseen Work**

Cha's First Retrospective in More Than Two Decades Will Be Accompanied by Multiple Public Programs, Including Symposium, Live Performance, and Marathon Reading of Cha's *Dictée*



(Berkeley, CA) October 22, 2025—On January 24, 2026, the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive will open *Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Multiple Offerings*, the largest exhibition to date dedicated to the art and life of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, marking the first time in more than two decades that this influential artist will be the subject of a retrospective. Featuring more than one hundred objects and ephemera drawn primarily from BAMPFA's collection and archives, the exhibition will span the full breadth of Cha's multifaceted career across conceptual art, film, performance, and poetry. *Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Multiple Offerings* will present aspects of the artist's practice that have never been displayed in a museum setting—including early works in ceramics and fiber—and highlight Cha's critical explorations into language, memory, and diasporic identity. Complemented by a robust series of

public programs—including a marathon reading of Cha’s experimental novel *Dictée*—the exhibition will situate Cha’s contributions within a constellation of artworks by contemporaries and peers, as well as those by artists working today who have directly responded to her legacy.

Born in Busan, South Korea in 1951, Cha immigrated with her family to the Bay Area in 1964 and was deeply influenced by the avant-garde currents that were reshaping the region’s art scene. As a student at UC Berkeley between 1969 and 1978, where she received undergraduate and graduate degrees in art practice and comparative literature, Cha worked as an art handler and film usher at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (then known as the University Art Museum). Since 1992, BAMPFA has been home to the Cha Collection and Archives, which were generously donated to the museum by the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Memorial Foundation in the wake of her death. These materials have served as an invaluable resource that has helped catalyze artistic, curatorial, and scholarly attention on Cha’s visionary practice, constituting over 75 percent of the museum’s research requests in recent years.

Best known for her groundbreaking 1982 publication *Dictée*, a hybrid novel-poem that collages image and text, Cha worked across different mediums to explore physical, cultural, and linguistic displacement and their attendant effects. She was keenly attuned to the active role that audiences play in the creation of meaning and prioritized non-linear narratives to allow for more open-ended forms of interpretation—what she termed a method of “Multiple Telling with Multiple Offering.” The retrospective adopts this framework to allow for a range of entry points into Cha’s work, guiding visitors through the themes—memory, displacement, and the mutability of language, among others—that recur throughout her oeuvre.

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Multiple Offerings situates the artist within the lively experimental art scenes of the Bay Area, New York, and Europe in the 1970s and ‘80s. Cha’s dialogue with Bay Area artists Jim Melchert, Terry Fox, and Reese Williams, for example, are crucial to understanding Cha’s importance for the fields of postmodern Conceptual and performance art. Works by these figures will be presented in the exhibition alongside newer works made by an

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intergenerational group of contemporary artists, including Cecilia Vicuña, Renée Green, Yong Soon Min, L. Franklin Gilliam, Cici Wu, Na Mira, and Jesse Chun, who have engaged deeply with Cha's practice and speak to the lasting impact of the artist today. Chun will also present the inaugural activation of her new performance series *날()nawi()fugue* at BAMPFA on the exhibition's opening weekend, drawing on themes of diasporic kinship and polyvocality partially inspired by Cha's legacy.

Chun's performance is one of multiple significant public programs that BAMPFA will mount during the run of *Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Multiple Offerings*, along with a day-long academic symposium of Cha scholars, open to the public; and a three-hour reading of *Dictée*, which will be presented in its entirety by a rotating group of interlocutors. A film series, running from April 2 to April 19, will feature Cha's own films presented in their original format, as well as films that were influential to Cha during her time working at the Pacific Film Archive. More information about these and other public programs will be announced in the coming weeks; visit bampfa.org for the latest updates.

"Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's radically interdisciplinary practice defies easy categorization," said Victoria Sung, BAMPFA's Phyllis C. Wattis Senior Curator, who is curating the exhibition with Tausif Noor, Curatorial Associate. "Through this retrospective we hope to show the full complexity of her oeuvre and open up the Cha collection and archives to future generations of artists and researchers."

In conjunction with the retrospective, BAMPFA will publish a richly illustrated catalogue—the first museum monograph dedicated to the artist in over twenty years—featuring comprehensive documentation of Cha's art and archives. Edited and with an introduction by Sung, the volume will include original curatorial and scholarly essays by Julia Bryan-Wilson, Jordan Carter, Danielle A. Jackson, Mason Leaver-Yap, and Tausif Noor, as well as a roundtable discussion with artists Na Mira and Cici Wu, moderated by Min Sun Jeon.

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Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Multiple Offerings will extend and deepen a growing public understanding of Cha's contributions following her inclusion in recent international exhibitions such as the 2023 Seoul Mediacity Biennale and the 2022 Whitney Biennial. The exhibition's debut in Berkeley will be followed by a national and international tour, with additional venues to be announced later this year.

"With this exhibition, we are excited to raise awareness of Cha's work and cement her place in the history of art from UC Berkeley, the Bay Area, and beyond," said Julie Rodrigues Widholm, BAMPFA's Executive Director. "Cha's rigorous examination of how identity is shaped by place, language, and form continues to resonate across generations and disciplines."



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About Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (b. 1951, Busan, South Korea; d. 1982, New York City) emigrated to the United States in 1962, settling first in Hawaii and then moving to San Francisco in 1964. The Bay Area remained Cha's home for most of her life. She attended the University of California, Berkeley between 1969 and 1978, receiving four undergraduate and graduate degrees in comparative literature and art. In 1980, Cha moved to New York City, where she worked as an editor and writer for Tanam Press, producing two important works: *Dictée*, a hybrid novel-poem that collages poetry, found text, and images; and *Apparatus*, an anthology of film writings edited by Cha. In 1982, Cha was awarded an artist's residency at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and was preparing for an upcoming exhibition at Artists Space, New York City, before her untimely death.

Cha's work has been included in recent exhibitions, including *12th Seoul Mediacity Biennale: This Too, Is a Map* (2023), Seoul Museum of Art; *Whitney Biennial 2022: Quiet as It's Kept*, Whitney Museum, New York City; and *Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Audience Distant Relative*, Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York (2022). In 1990, BAMPFA organized the artist's first solo museum exhibition as part of its MATRIX series of contemporary art, followed by her first retrospective, *The Dream of the Audience*, in 2001. The exhibition traveled to seven venues, including University of California, Irvine; Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; Krannert Art Museum at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Henry Art Gallery at University of Washington, Seattle; SSamzie Space, Seoul; Generali Foundation, Vienna; and Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona. In 1992, Cha's family donated a major selection of her artworks and archives to BAMPFA, where they form the cornerstone of the museum's Conceptual Art Study Center and continue to be accessible to researchers today.

About BAMPFA

Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive 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 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

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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 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.

Exhibition Credits

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Multiple Offerings is curated by Victoria Sung, Phyllis C. Wattis Senior Curator, with Tausif Noor, Curatorial Associate. This exhibition is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art, the Korea Foundation, and the Shah Garg Women Artists Research Fund.

Image credits

1. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Aveugle Voix*, 1975. Performance documentation, 63 Bluxome Street, San Francisco. University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Gift of the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Memorial Foundation.
2. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Other Things Seen, Other Things Heard*, 1978. University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Gift of the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Memorial Foundation.

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