

SFMOMA ANNOUNCES ACQUISITIONS BY MORE THAN 65 ARTISTS

Including Important Works by Isaac Julien, Yayoi Kusama, Oscar Murillo and Amy Sherald, Among Numerous Others



Isaac Julien, *Ten Thousand Waves*, 2010

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (June 18, 2024)—The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) announced that it has recently acquired works by more than 65 artists, including, among others, **Virgil Abloh, Farah Al Qasimi, Yael Bartana, Merikokeb Berhanu, JB Blunk, Beverly Buchanan, rafa esparza, Vaginal Davis, Rachel Harrison, Tyler Hobbs, Ulysses Jenkins, Rashid Johnson, Isaac Julien, Yayoi Kusama, Doyle Lane, Mire Lee, Glenn Ligon, Christian Marclay, Oscar Murillo, Philippe Parreno, Paul Pfeiffer, Ron Rael and Virginia San Fratello, Isabel Rower, Niki de Saint Phalle, Amy Sherald, soft geometry, Kunié Sugiura, teenage engineering, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Martin Wong and Christopher Wool.** The acquisitions represent SFMOMA’s ongoing commitment to collect works by both celebrated artists and those deserving of greater recognition while further enhancing the representation of women, artists of color, and those from California and the Bay Area within its holdings.

“The acquisitions announced today capture an incredible depth of artistic ambition, formal innovation, and social and cultural experience,” said Christopher Bedford, SFMOMA’s Helen

and Charles Schwab Director. “The group reflects SFMOMA’s driving vision to enhance our collection with works by a diverse spectrum of artists who engage with an equally diverse range of subject matter, whether focused on aesthetic experimentation or on grappling with central issues of their time. I’m grateful for the thoughtful consideration that our curatorial teams have brought to this selection and to our broader acquisition strategies. I look forward to sharing these extraordinary works, and the narratives they hold, with our community.”

Among the many highlights is **Yayoi Kusama’s *Dreaming of Earth’s Sphericity, I Would Offer My Love*** (2023), the newest of the celebrated artist’s beloved Infinity Mirror Rooms. The work first premiered at David Zwirner in New York in spring 2023 to overwhelming audience enthusiasm and was recently featured in SFMOMA’s popular special exhibition *Yayoi Kusama: Infinite Love*, which drew over 170,000 visitors to the museum. With the acquisition, this Infinity Mirror Room will remain on long-term view at SFMOMA from June 22, 2024 to January 2025, where visitors will now have the opportunity to experience it as part of general admission to the museum.

Among the other outstanding works acquired by SFMOMA that feature in recent or upcoming exhibitions are **Amy Sherald’s *For Love, and for Country*** (2022) and **rafa esparza’s *Corpo RanFLA: Terra Cruiser*** (2022). Sherald’s large-scale painting reinterprets the iconic photograph *V-J Day in Times Square* (1945) by Alfred Eisenstaedt through the lens of queer Black experience. Created in direct response to the increase in legislation restricting the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals across the U.S., the work offers a space to reflect on the power of love and the subjects’ interior lives. The work will hold a prominent place in the artist’s first mid-career survey, *Amy Sherald: American Sublime*, premiering at SFMOMA in November 2024. Esparza’s multimedia sculpture *Corpo RanFLA: Terra Cruiser* (2022) was featured in the acclaimed SFMOMA exhibition *Sitting on Chrome* (on view from August 2023 to February 2024). To create the work, esparza transformed a 25-cent mechanical pony ride to resemble a lowrider bike. The artist further activated the work with a performance at the museum last fall. Other recently acquired works include objects by **Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni**, **Jacob Jensen**, **Carlos H. Matos**, **Verner Panton** and **teenage engineering** on view in the SFMOMA exhibition *Art of Noise* through August 18, 2024.

SFMOMA also acquired several works by **Isaac Julien**, who recently designed an immersive dinner experience for the museum’s annual fundraiser **Art Bash** in support of the museum’s family and education programming. The acquisitions include the major nine-channel video installation *Ten Thousand Waves* (2010), which addresses the story of 23 Chinese cockle pickers from Fujian Province who drowned off the coast of northwest England. With the work, Julien challenges the colonial gaze and offers a non-Western perspective of storytelling through a kaleidoscopic cinematic experience. In doing so, he furthers his

ongoing interest in examining notions of a “better life” within the context of migration and global displacement. The large-scale photograph *Freedom / Diasporic Dream-Space No. 1* (2022), also added to the collection, is inspired by the artist’s latest film, *Once Again . . . (Statues Never Die)* (2022), about the relationship between Alain Locke, a leading Harlem Renaissance figure, and Albert E. Barnes, a pioneering art collector and philanthropist.

The wide range of newly acquired works also includes important additions to the museum’s expansive photography collection. Among them are works by **Hal Fischer, Rosalind Fox Solomon, Jarod Lew, Alessandra Sanguinetti, and Deanna Templeton**, as well as **Farah Al Qasimi, Iñaki Bonillas, Mercedes Dorame and Kunié Sugiura**. Many of these photographs capture the human experience in ways that encourage connection and understanding, from Fox Solomon’s poignant black-and-white portraits from her acclaimed series *Portraits in the Time of AIDS* (1987-88), which sought to humanize the disease, to Sanguinetti’s images of two cousins living in the Argentinian countryside and Lew’s images of young second-generation Asian Americans navigating the expectations of their immigrant parents and their own American experience. Other works represent innovations in the medium—such as those by Sugiura, an under-recognized artist who has been working since the 1960s. In *Yellow Mum* (1969) and *Deadend Street* (1978), Sugiura combined photographic and painted or drawn elements to create powerful hybrid forms.



Merikokeb Berhanu, *Untitled LXXX*, 2023

Additional highlights:

- **Niki de Saint Phalle's** *Bathing Beauty* (1967) is a rare early example from the artist's celebrated *Nanas* series, which joyously subverts patriarchal tropes about women. In this work, Saint Phalle depicts the defiant freedom of the female form in direct contrast to the eroticized depictions of nude female bathers by 19th-century male painters. *Bathing Beauty* features the artist's characteristic brightly colored and patterned surfaces, highlighting de Saint Phalle's singular aesthetic and distinct approach to proto-feminist work. This is the first work by de Saint Phalle to enter SFMOMA's collection.
- **Apichatpong Weerasethakul's** films and video installations are characterized by their non-linear storytelling and engagement with themes of loss, desire, memory and metaphysical experience. *For Bruce* (2022) pays homage to Bruce Baillie, a key figure in New American Cinema whose work captured a lyrical and lush West Coast sensibility. The work highlights Baillie's enduring impact on experimental cinema and reflects Weerasethakul's own distinct approach to filmmaking. This work is the second by the filmmaker to enter the museum's collection.
- The painting *Untitled LXXX* (2023) by **Merikokeb Berhanu** captures her unique approach to layering paint and contrasting colors and patterns. The work offers a quiet meditation on the impact of industry and urban life on the natural world and the resulting distance between us and nature. This exemplary painting is the first work by the artist to enter SFMOMA's collection, adding to its holdings of work by artists of the African diaspora.
- **Martin Wong** was raised in San Francisco and returned to the city from New York following his AIDS diagnosis in 1994. Throughout his career, his paintings were characterized by a unique stylized realism that explored homoerotic desire and the experiences of urban life. *DC-3* (1992) depicts a sharply angled airplane flying over San Francisco's Chinatown neighborhood and is imbued with autobiographical overtones. The painting joins four other paintings and one drawing by Wong in SFMOMA's collection, expanding the representation of San Francisco-related works by the artist from his last decade.
- **Yael Bartana's** video and photographic installations, films, and performances explore the imagery of identity and the politics of memory. *Two Minutes to Midnight* (2021) is a single-channel video installation that engages with the central question, "What if women ruled the world?" The work, which is partially inspired by previously staged performances grappling with the same theme, focuses on a fictitious all-women government facing an existential threat. This visionary work reflects four years of interdisciplinary work analyzing geopolitical power structures and presents audiences with an alternative to a discourse founded in masculine definitions and articulations

of power. The work, co-acquired with the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, is the first by Bartana to enter SFMOMA's collection.

- **Oscar Murillo's** wide-ranging and acclaimed practice embraces performance, immersive installations and paintings that engage with a breadth of materialities. Core to his practice are sewn canvases that the artist coats with layers of paint in his studio and which he then takes on his travels, installing the works in different locales as he moves across place and experience. Murillo's canvases from *for the souls of the rotten mighty* (2016) were made in the Korean city of Anyang in collaboration with a local *mudang*, or shaman, to harness the spiritual power of the land in his works. They are the first works by the artist in SFMOMA's collection and are currently on view as part of the exhibition *What Matters: A Proposition in Eight Rooms*.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

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