

HAMMER

ICA LA
INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES

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Hammer Museum and ICA LA Present *Witch Hunt*
On view October 10, 2021 – January 9, 2022



(Los Angeles, CA)— The Hammer Museum at UCLA and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA) present *Witch Hunt*, an incisive international survey of 16 critically acclaimed artists whose practices deploy feminist, queer, and decolonial strategies to explore current and historical political events, social conditions, and artistic legacies. **Leonor Antunes, Yael Bartana, Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, Candice Breitz, Shu Lea Cheang, Minerva Cuevas, Vaginal Davis, Bouchra Khalili, Every Ocean Hughes** (formerly Emily Roysdon), **Laura Lima, Teresa Margolles, Otobong Nkanga, Okwui Okpokwasili, Lara Schmitz, and Beverly Semmes** animate a range of current global feminist thought and action through painting, sculpture, video, photography, sound, and performance. The exhibition features many newly commissioned works and major projects that are making their United States or west coast debut. Organized by Connie Butler, Hammer chief curator, and Anne Ellegood, ICA LA Good Works Executive Director, with Nika Chilewich, Hammer curatorial assistant, *Witch Hunt* will be on view at both institutions from October 10, 2021 to January 9, 2022.

“Witch Hunt is a presentation of powerful projects by 16 radical and brilliant artists. Connie and Anne have dedicated much of their curatorial careers to supporting the practices of women artists and the political urgencies facing women more broadly. *Witch Hunt* makes a major contribution to the discussion.”

 said Hammer Museum director Ann Philbin.

*“Anne and I felt it was urgent to center women artists in Africa, South and Central America, and within the United States, expanding the scope of feminist art history and practice we had previously written about and curated. It’s exciting to collaborate with the international list of artists in *Witch Hunt*, many of whom are showing their work for the first time in Los Angeles.”* said Connie Butler.

Anne Ellegood says, *“Connie and I started talking about this exhibition many years ago, and it is thrilling to finally see it coming to life. While COVID delayed the original dates of *Witch Hunt*, the artists’ timely, critical, and essential projects in some sense feel even more vital today, and we are proud to showcase their important works. At ICA LA, we are delighted to be collaborating with the Hammer to present *Witch Hunt* at both of our museums, co-produce a range of public programs, and cross-pollinate our audiences.”*

Images (L-R): Every Ocean Hughes, *One Big Bag*, 2021. Single-channel video projection, sound. 38 minutes. Courtesy of the artist.; Yael Bartana, *Patriarchy is History*, 2019. Neon. 78 1/8 × 72 15/16 in. (198.4 × 185.3 cm). 198.4 × 185.3 cm. Courtesy of the artist, Annet Gelink Gallery and Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv. Photo: Tom Haartsen.; Okwui Okpokwasili, *Poor People’s TV Room Solo*, 2014/2021. Video and mixed-media installation. Dimensions variable. Installation view, New Museum, New York, 2021. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Paul Jackson 2021.

Witch Hunt poses the questions: How can feminist ideologies within artistic practice meaningfully participate in debates within contemporary culture and politics? And what role do artists play in making visible the challenges we face as a global community? These featured artists demonstrate decades-long commitments to feminist creative practice as a subversive, expansive, and oftentimes collaborative methodology. Together their works provide an opportunity to examine ideas, expand awareness, and encourage dialogue about urgent contemporary issues such as the body and its vulnerability; women's rights and representation; the erasure of women's contributions to critical movements and histories; the impact of technologies of surveillance; environmental justice; the reimagining and queering of political discourse; the imperative for feminist practice to be inclusive and intersectional; and the power of collective action.

The projects in *Witch Hunt* consistently argue for the value of a critical feminist perspective within the subject matter, production, and presentation of contemporary art. Together, the works constitute an art of resistance, proposing new ways of thinking and enacting change at a moment of unprecedented suffering and upheaval across the globe. There will be 11 artists presented at the Hammer and five at ICA LA with newly created artworks at both venues.

Newly produced works at the Hammer Museum include:

- **Yael Bartana's** *Two Minutes to Midnight* (2021) is a 47-minute film in which the artist stages an alternative geopolitical hierarchy, a government led by women. Centered around the proposition "What if Women Ruled the World?," this performative work uses Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* as a point of satirical departure to analyze the world power game and propose an alternative to masculine discourse.
- New photographs and a sculptural installation by **Teresa Margolles** will occupy the Hammer galleries and lobby wall. Based on her current research in Ciudad Juarez with the trans activist community, Margolles has created a monumental sculpture comprised of stacked swamp coolers for the museum's lobby. These low-tech air conditioning units are used by the women who run *Respetttrans*, a shelter for LGBTQ migrants from Mexico and Central America fleeing government-sanctioned violence and seeking asylum in the United States. The recycled air in Margolles's minimalist sculpture carries the sweat and lived experience of this transient community struggling to escape political persecution.
- **Leonor Antunes's** sculptural installation *The homemaker and her domain* weaves together design histories of Trude Guermonprez, Kay Sekimachii, and others from the rich legacy of Bauhaus architects and designers in Southern California and Japan.

Newly produced works at ICA LA include:

- **Vaginal Davis** presents a new installation titled *Mary, Mary* after her mother, including 49 painted portraits of women—both historical figures and personal relations—who have been influential in her life, made with everyday beauty products on found paper and a 35-minute sound piece, *My Mother Told Me*, which is an homage to her hometown Los Angeles and to her mother, whose radical separatist politics and fierce community of women deeply informed the artist's sense of the power of women.
- **Every Ocean Hughes** (formerly known as Emily Roysdon) has created a new single-channel video, *One Big Bag*, which draws on the artist's recent experiences with death and grief. Growing out of an extensive period of research, *One Big Bag* explores what the artist describes as "queer death," a field that addresses questions of self-determination, mutual aid, survival, diverse kinship, and accountability. Inspired by the mobile corpse kit—full of mundane household objects—that a death doula always has packed and ready to go for urgent calls to care for the newly dead, Hughes's work addresses the materiality of death, how care for the body reflects cultural values, and a queering of the experience of death in a society that often hides its actual processes from public view.

- Los Angeles–based artist **Lara Schnitger** has created five new 12-foot tall monumental figures made from a range of fabrics, such as nylon, fake fur, and lingerie, and held aloft with simple wooden sticks. Inspired by the artist’s ongoing research into histories of protest marches and struggles for women’s rights, these figures are drawn from images of nudist marches in which the body and self-empowerment are celebrated. Collectively titled *Warts and All*, the figures will be freestanding in a circular formation, and the public invited to move in between and around them.
- **Minerva Cuevas** has designed a site-specific mural for the ICA LA’s façade. *Female Earth* (2021) reflects upon ideas of ecofeminism, and specifically Carolyn Merchant’s 1980 book, *The Death of Nature*, which explores the impact of the scientific revolution, in which ideologies of patriarchy and capitalism led increasingly to the exploitation of both women and the earth.

In addition to the new projects, *Witch Hunt* features performances created on the occasion of the exhibition.

- **Okwui Okpokwasili** will perform at the public opening at the Hammer on October 10, 2021. Utilizing the museum’s courtyard and outdoor spaces, the artist will perform an extended song, which will culminate in the museum’s galleries and engage with her work *Poor People’s TV Room Solo* (2017/2021).
- Activating the work of **Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz** will be periodic performances by performers Ginger Brooks Takahashi and MPA. Engaging the audience in unexpected moments of encounter and responding to the soundscape created as part of the duo’s *Telepathic Improvisation* (2017), the in-gallery performances respond to the installation, which is being shown in the United States for the first time.
- Marking the closing of the exhibition, beginning January 8, 2022, JOAN Gallery will showcase the CarWash label, a collaboration between fashion designer Jennifer Minniti and artist **Beverly Semmes**, with a pop-up shop and performance installation. CarWash Collective considers the deeper dynamics of fashion and politics as Minniti designs clothing based on Semmes’s Feminist Responsibility Project.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Witch Hunt is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue. Published by Delmonico Books, this exhibition catalogue features a foreword by Ann Philbin and includes essays by Connie Butler and Anne Ellegood, with artist profiles by Vanessa Arizmendi, Ana Briz, Nika Chilewich, and Jamillah James.

CREDIT

Witch Hunt is organized by the Hammer Museum and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Witch Hunt is curated by Connie Butler, Hammer Chief Curator and Anne Ellegood, ICA LA Good Works Executive Director, with Nika Chilewich, Hammer Curatorial Assistant.

At the Hammer, *Witch Hunt* is made possible by lead funding from The Kaleta A. Doolin Foundation. Major support is provided by Kelsey Lee Offield, with generous funding from Darren Star, Jill and Peter Kraus and from Hope Warschaw and John Law. The exhibition is also supported by Bill Hair, Emily and Teddy Greenspan and by Etant donnés Contemporary Art, a program developed by FACE Foundation and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States, with lead funding from the French Ministry of Culture and Institut Français-Paris, the Florence Gould Foundation, The Ford Foundation, the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Chanel USA, the ADAGP, and the CPGA. Additional support is provided by Artis, Betty Duker, and Taiwan Academy of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Los Angeles.

At ICA LA, major support for *Witch Hunt* is provided by the Vera R. Campbell Foundation, Jerry & Terri Kohl Family Foundation, and the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Family Foundation. The exhibition is also generously funded by grants from the Pasadena Art Alliance, Art Dealers Association of America

Foundation, Henry Moore Foundation, and the Dutch Culture USA program by the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York, as well as contributions from Christine Meleo Bernstein and Armyan Bernstein, Alice and Nahum Lainer, Marla and Jeffrey Michaels, Kathleen Melville Rosenbloom and Chip Rosenbloom, and Michael Silver.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum is part of the School of the Arts and Architecture at UCLA, and offers exhibitions and collections that span classic to contemporary art. It holds more than 50,000 works in its collection, including one of the finest collections of works on paper in the nation, the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts. Through a wide-ranging, international exhibition program and the biennial, Made in L.A., the Hammer highlights contemporary art since the 1960s, especially the work of emerging and under recognized artists. The exhibitions, permanent collections, and nearly 300 public programs annually—including film screenings, lectures, symposia, readings, music performances, and workshops for families—are all free to the public.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the Hammer Museum is free, made possible through the generosity of benefactors Erika J. Glazer and Brenda R. Potter. Tuesday-Sunday: 11am to 6pm. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Boulevard at Westwood, Los Angeles. Onsite parking \$7 (maximum 3 hours) or \$7 flat rate after 6 p.m. Visit hammer.ucla.edu for details or call 310-443-7000.

ABOUT ICA LA

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA) is an epicenter of artistic experimentation and incubator of new ideas. Founded in 1984 as the Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMMoA) and reestablished in 2017 with a new identity and home in Downtown Los Angeles, ICA LA builds upon a distinguished history of bold curatorial vision and innovative programming to illuminate the important untold stories and emerging voices in contemporary art and culture. The museum's 12,700 square-foot renovated industrial building—designed by wHY Architecture under the leadership of Kulapat Yantrasast—features ample space for exhibitions, public programs, retail pop-ups, integrated offices, and special projects.

ICA LA's mission is to support art that sparks the pleasure of discovery and challenges the way we see and experience the world, ourselves, and each other. ICA LA is committed to upending hierarchies of race, class, gender, and culture. Through exhibitions, education programs, and community partnerships, ICA LA fosters critique of the familiar and empathy with the different. ICA LA is committed to making contemporary art relevant and accessible for all. Admission is free. For more information, visit theicala.org. Join the conversation, follow on social media at [@theicala](https://twitter.com/theicala) and [#icala](https://twitter.com/icala).

ICA LA INFORMATION

Exhibition hours, by appointment: Wednesday–Sunday, 12pm to 5pm. To schedule an appointment, visit theicala.org/visit.

Address: 1717 E. 7th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90021. Parking available onsite.