

For Immediate Release: May 23, 2022
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Hammer Museum Presents *Andrea Bowers*
June 19–September 4, 2022



(Los Angeles, CA)— The Hammer Museum at UCLA presents the first museum retrospective surveying more than two decades of work by the Los Angeles-based artist **Andrea Bowers** (b. 1965, Wilmington, Ohio). Bowers has built an international reputation as a chronicler of contemporary history, documenting activism as it unfolds and collecting research on the front lines. Her large-scale installations, detailed color pencil drawings, and impactful videos speak to deeply entrenched inequities and the work of generations of activists fighting for immigration rights, workers' rights, climate justice, and women's rights. *Andrea Bowers* brings together approximately 90 works spanning drawing, performance, installation, sculpture, video, and neon as well as a trove of ephemera. Co-organized with the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the exhibition is on view at the Hammer from June 19 to September 4, 2022.

"Andrea Bowers's work is always timely, always urgent, and always powerful. We are thrilled and honored to present this retrospective of her decades-long practice of bringing together art and activism. We share the pursuit of using art as a platform to create a more just world and shine a light on the important work of movement leaders and activists," said Hammer director Ann Philbin.

For over 30 years, Bowers has used her artistic practice as a political exercise, a narrative platform that she lends to movements of social and political activism on some of today's most pressing issues. Bowers embeds with different activist organizations to create work in service of the individuals, groups, and pressing issues they champion. As a whole, her work is a musing on the role of the artist as ally, and art as a vehicle for political and social justice.

Organized thematically, the exhibition includes several subjects central to Bowers's practice:

- *Memorial to Arcadia Woodlands Clear-Cut* (2013) and *My Name Means Future* (2020) focus on issues related to environmental justice. The former is a large-scale sculpture based on Bowers's involvement with tree-sitting activists protesting the destruction of old-growth trees in California. The latter is a video, and one of the newest works in the exhibition, which features Tokata Iron Eyes, a young Indigenous rights activist whose ancestral lands have been threatened by the Dakota Access Pipeline project.
- *Soft Blockade (Feminist Barricade)* (2004) and *Design of Choice (My Body My Choice with Stripes)* (2005) exemplify Bowers's ongoing research into feminist causes, from the Suffragette movements at the beginning of the twentieth century, to abortion rights in the 1970s, to the

Images (L-R): Andrea Bowers, *My Name Means Future*, 2020, HD video, color, sound. 51min (video still). Courtesy of the Artist and Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York; Andrea Bowers, *Disarm Rapists* (Original illustration, "Disarm Rapists / Smash Sexism," by Betsy Warrior, 1971), 2017. Acrylic marker on cardboard. 108 × 112 × 6 in. (274.32 × 284.48 × 15.24 cm). Private collection, Toronto, Canada. Photo: Jeff McLane; Andrea Bowers, *Step It Up Activist, Sand Key Reef, Key West, Florida, Part of North America's Only Remaining Coral Barrier Reef*, 2009. Colored pencil on paper. 22 1/4 × 30 in. (56.5 × 76.2 cm). Charlotte Feng Ford Collection. Photo: Thomas Mueller.

calling out of sexual violence against women in the 2010s. Soft blockade is the name given to the non-violent civil disobedience technique of using your body alone as a human barricade. *Design of Choice (My Body My Choice With Stripes)* questions the received neutrality of abstraction. Bowers situates herself in these works within the legacies of first- and second-wave feminism, particularly the feminist artists of Southern California in the 1980s and 1990s. In works like these, Bowers actualizes feminist histories as a lens she uses to understand the current state of women's rights.

- *Trans Liberation: Building a Movement* (2016) is a set of portraits of empowered women that addresses LGBTQ activism and transgender advocacy, particularly within the trans community in Southern California.
- *No Olvidado – Not Forgotten* (2010) is a suite of massive drawings featuring the names of hundreds of individuals who lost their lives crossing the US–Mexico border. These names were originally provided by [Border Angels](#).
- *Work Table with Feminist Political Graphics* (2016) showcases protest posters accumulated over many years that represent powerful women throughout history. Slogans such as “Dignity. Safety. Justice.” are displayed on posters stacked on a table for visitors to view, the same materials used in grassroots organizations for immigration and labor movements.

ACTIVIST INTERVIEW SERIES

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Hammer has commissioned a series of interviews featuring intergenerational conversations between young activists and their predecessors, where they discuss the current state of affairs and their different experiences fighting for environmental justice, trans rights, migrant rights, and indigenous rights. The interviews engage participants of Los Angeles-based organizations [Translatin@ Coalition](#) and [Extinction Rebellion](#) as well as others to be confirmed.

The episodes will be released as audio podcasts on the Bloomberg Connects app and as videos on Hammer Channel. The series is funded by the Bloomberg Philanthropies.

RELATED PROGRAMS

Conversations

Andrea Bowers & Connie Butler

Sunday, June 26, 2pm

Hammer chief curator Connie Butler in conversation with artist Andrea Bowers.

Protecting the Amazon Rainforest: Averting the Ecological Tipping Point

Thursdays, June 2, 7:30pm

A conversation with indigenous leaders, artists, and scientists.

Curator Walk-through

Sunday, June 26, 1pm

Hammer chief curator **Connie Butler** leads a walk-through of the exhibition.

Exhibition Tours

Select Saturdays, 1pm

Educators lead tours of the exhibition *Andrea Bowers*. Visit [hammer.ucla.edu](#) for a list of dates.

Lunchtime Art Talks

Hammer curatorial staff members* lead 15-minute in-person discussions on a work of art. Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.

July 13

Andrea Bowers

Letters to an Army of Three, 2005

*Nika Chilewich

July 20

Andrea Bowers

My Name Means Future, 2020

*Nika Chilewich

July 27

Andrea Bowers

Radical Feminist Tree Sitting Platform, 2013

*Connie Butler

Visit hammer.ucla.edu/andrea-bowers for a full list of related programs

CREDITS

Andrea Bowers is organized by the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. The exhibition is co-curated by Michael Darling, formerly the James W. Aldorf Chief Curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and Connie Butler, Chief Curator of the Hammer Museum, with Nika Chilewich, curatorial assistant, Hammer Museum.

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CATALOGUE

Andrea Bowers is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue. Published by Delmonico Books, this exhibition catalogue features a foreword by Ann Philbin and Madeleine Grynsztejn and includes text by Deena Metzger, Lucía Sanromán, Lucia Allain, and Julia Bryan-Wilson. The catalogue is edited by the exhibition curators Connie Butler and Michael Darling. Designed by Jessica Fleischmann, still room, the book is available at the Hammer Store or online at store.hammer.ucla.edu (\$60).

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. 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.