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Media Contact: Santiago Pazos, [spazos@hammer.ucla.edu](mailto:spazos@hammer.ucla.edu)

## Hammer Museum Names Essence Harden and Paulina Pobochoa as Curators for Made in L.A. 2025

Opening Fall 2025



Photo: Lauren Randolph

**(Los Angeles, CA)**—The Hammer Museum announced today that the next edition of its critically acclaimed biennial **Made in L.A.** will be co-curated by **Essence Harden** and **Paulina Pobochoa**. Harden is a curator at the California African American Museum and is also curator of the *Focus* section of the upcoming edition of Frieze Los Angeles. Pobochoa recently joined the Hammer as its new Robert Soros Senior Curator; she was previously a curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Made in L.A. 2025 will open at the Hammer in the fall of 2025. This edition will be presented in collaboration with the California African American Museum; details around this collaboration will be announced at a later date.

**Ann Philbin**, director of the Hammer Museum, said, “Los Angeles never ceases to be an inspiring city, with so many artists, communities, and cultures overlapping and always evolving. I can’t wait to see what artists Paulina and Essence will discover and what they will reveal about this city as they develop their exhibition.”

**Made in L.A. 2025** will be the seventh iteration of the biennial series that highlights the practices of artists working throughout the greater Los Angeles area, with an emphasis on emerging and under-recognized artists.

Since the first Made in L.A. in 2012, Los Angeles philanthropists and art collectors **Jarl and Pamela Mohn** have generously funded the biennial prizes. The \$100,000 Mohn Award, the \$25,000 Career Achievement Award, both of which are selected by a professional jury, and the \$25,000 Public Recognition Award, which is determined through votes cast by visitors to the exhibition, will once again be presented in conjunction with the exhibition. In 2021, the Mohns also endowed future editions of Made in L.A. and the Mohn Awards with an additional \$5.15 million gift.

## ABOUT THE CURATORS

**Paulina Pobocha** is an art historian, writer, and curator who specializes in art made between 1960 and today. During her tenure in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA), she organized and co-organized exhibitions including *YOU ARE HERE\* Contemporary Art in the Garden* (2023); *Guadalupe Maravilla: Luz y fuerza* (2021); *Constantin Brancusi Sculpture* (2019); *The Long Run* (2017); *Rachel Harrison: Perth Amboy* (2016); *Robert Gober: The Heart Is Not a Metaphor* (2014); and *Claes Oldenburg: The Street and The Store* (2013). She was central to the conception and display of the Museum's contemporary collection galleries, with monographic installations such as *Gerhard Richter: October 18, 1977* and *Mike Kelley: Deodorized Central Mass with Satellites*, as well as thematic ones, among them *Random-Access Memory: The Rise of Digital Computing at the End of the Cold War*, featuring the work of Isa Genzken, Thomas Struth, and Rosemarie Trockel, and *Clandestine Knowledge*, which considers information passed across generations and geographies as a tool of self-empowerment in work by Kirsten Brätsch, Jana Euler, Otobong Nkanga, Paulina Olowaska, Evelyn Taocheng Wang, and Hilma af Klint. For MoMA, Pobocha is currently working with Thomas Schütte on his forthcoming retrospective exhibition which opens in September 2024.

In addition to her work at the Museum of Modern Art, Pobocha lectures widely and has served as Critic at the Yale University School of Art. Her writing has appeared in numerous publications.

Pobocha received her BA in art history from the Johns Hopkins University and her MPhil, also in art history, from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

**Essence Harden** is a visual arts curator and program manager at the California African American Museum (CAAM) and the curator for Frieze LA, Focus 2024. In addition to curating exhibitions at CAAM and Art + Practice via CAAM's five-year collaboration there, Harden has curated exhibitions at the Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA), Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD), Human Resources, Los Angeles, and Oakland Museum of California, among others.

Harden is a contributor to the *New York Times Magazine*, the *Los Angeles Times* magazine *Image*, *SSENSE*, *Art21*, *Contemporary Art Review LA* (CARLA), *Artsy*, *LALA*, *Cultured* magazine, *Performa* magazine, and *SFAQ*. They have written catalog entries for the Hammer's *Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living*; OCMA's *California Biennial 2022: Pacific Gold*; *Prospect 5: Yesterday we said tomorrow* (2021); *Brave New Worlds: Exploration of Space* (Palm Springs Art Museum, 2019); and *What Needs to Be Said: Hallie Ford Fellows in the Visual Arts* (Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, 2019). Harden has also served as an art consultant for film and television.

Harden is a 2018 recipient of The Creative Capital, Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, and a 2020 Annenberg Innovation Lab Civic Media Fellow. They graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in History and received their Master of Arts from the Department of African American Studies at UC Berkeley. Harden is ABD in African Diaspora Studies at UC Berkeley.

### **ABOUT MADE IN L.A.**

The Hammer's biennial exhibition series *Made in L.A.* focuses exclusively on artists from Los Angeles with a primary focus on emerging artists. The Los Angeles biennial debuts new installations, videos, films, sculptures, performances, and paintings commissioned specifically for the exhibition and offers insight into the current trends and practices coming out of Los Angeles, one of the most active and energetic art communities in the world. *Made in L.A.* began in 2012 with a second iteration in 2014 and a third in 2016, and followed the tradition of the Hammer Invitational exhibitions, which occurred every two years and included *Snapshot* (2001), *International Paper* (2003), *Thing* (2005), *Eden's Edge* (2007), *Nine Lives* (2009), and *All of this and nothing* (2011).

*Made in L.A. 2012* was organized by a team of curators from the Hammer Museum and LAXART: Hammer senior curator Anne Ellegood, Hammer curator Ali Subotnick, LAXART director and chief curator Lauri Firstenberg, LAXART associate director and senior curator Cesar Garcia, and LAXART curator-at-large Malik Gaines.

*Made in L.A. 2014* was co-curated by Hammer chief curator Connie Butler and Los Angeles-based independent curator Michael Ned Holte.

*Made in L.A. 2016: a, the, though, only* was co-curated by Hammer curator Aram Moshayedi and Hamza Walker, former director of education and associate curator at the Renaissance Society in Chicago and currently director of LAXART in Los Angeles.

*Made in L.A. 2018* was organized by Anne Ellegood, senior curator, and Erin Christovale, assistant curator, with MacKenzie Stevens, curatorial associate. Performances were coordinated by Vanessa Arizmendi, curatorial assistant.

*Made in L.A. 2020: a version* was organized by independent curators Myriam Ben Salah and Lauren Mackler, with the Hammer's Ikechukwu Onyewuenyi, assistant curator of performance. *Made in L.A. 2020* was organized by the Hammer Museum in partnership with The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens.

*Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living* was organized by independent curator Diana Nawi and Hammer curator Pablo José Ramírez, with Ashton Cooper, Luce Curatorial Fellow.

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### **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 *Made in L.A.* biennial, 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. Hours: Tuesday–Sunday 11 a.m.–6 p.m. Closed Mondays and national holidays. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Boulevard at Westwood, Los Angeles. Onsite parking is \$8 for the first 3 hours (maximum \$22), or \$8 flat rate after 5 p.m. Valet parking is available at the Lindbrook Drive entrance for \$10. Visit [hammer.ucla.edu](http://hammer.ucla.edu) for details or call 310-443-7000

Free Admission at the Hammer Museum is courtesy of Marcy Carsey, the Erika J Glazer Family Foundation, and the Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation.