

MAJOR FREE PUBLIC PROGRAMMING ANNOUNCED FOR *SOFT POWER* EXHIBITION THIS FALL/WINTER AT SFMOMA

Includes Artist Talk with 17 Artists, Symposium on Borders Co-Presented with UC Santa Cruz, Performances by Jason Moran, LaToya Ruby Frazier and The Sister Tour and Open Rehearsals with Tanya Lukin Linklater

Opening in October 2019—International Contemporary Exhibition *SOFT POWER* Features 15 New Commissions and Recent Work by 20 Artists



SAN FRANCISCO, CA (September 4, 2019; updated October 22, 2019)—Timely and provocative, *SOFT POWER* is an exhibition about the ways in which artists deploy art to explore their roles as citizens and social actors. Appropriated from the Reagan-era term used to describe how a country’s “soft” assets such as culture, political values and foreign policies can be more influential than violence or coercion, the title *SOFT POWER* suggests a contemplation on the potential of art and offers a provocation to the public to exert their own influence on the world. The exhibition is on view at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) from October 26, 2019 through February 17, 2020.

Accompanying *SOFT POWER* is a major portfolio of free public programming designed to provide deeper insight and engagement with the themes raised by the exhibition. The programs include the

following opportunities, featuring conversations among artists, musical performances, open rehearsals for dance, spoken word and a symposium exploring the politics of borders, produced in conjunction with the University of California, Santa Cruz.

SOFT POWER ARTISTS' DISCUSSION

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 7 PM

PHYLLIS WATTIS THEATER AT SFMOMA

FREE tickets to the Artists' Discussion will be available on SFMOMA's website as of September 19.

Witness an informal discussion between artists participating in *SOFT POWER*. In this unscripted event, nearly all of the 20 artists will be present and in dialogue with each other and Eungie Joo, curator of contemporary art, and Jovanna Venegas, assistant curator of contemporary art, about the concepts and processes that led to the work on view.

This event is at capacity. Rush tickets may be available 30 minutes prior to the start of the event on a first-come, first-served basis. Footage of this event will be simulcast in the Koret Education Center on Floor 2.

OPEN REHEARSAL: TANYA LUKIN LINKLATER

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 10 AM–4 PM

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 10 AM–4 PM

GINA AND STUART PETERSON WHITE BOX AT SFMOMA

FREE with museum admission.

For her SFMOMA commission, Tanya Lukin Linklater researched Alutiiq cultural belongings held in the collection of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology in Berkeley. Together with dancers, she then developed a choreographic score for these displaced objects that explores temporal encounter as a form of repatriation. The resulting performance will take place in the Hearst Museum storage—behind closed doors, but documented—and the footage will become part of a new video work that will enter the galleries in December.

SOFT POWER ARTISTS' FILMS SCREENINGS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2019, 11:30 AM + 2:30 PM

PHYLLIS WATTIS THEATER AT SFMOMA

FREE admission. First come, first served.

11:30 AM

CRUZADA (CRUSADE), 2010, dir: Cinthia Marcelle

Camera, 2012, dir: Dave McKenzie

Blind Ambition, 2012, dir: Hassan Khan

2:30 PM

Nefandus, 2013, dir: Carlos Motta

The Island, 2017, dir: Tuan Andrew Nguyen

Flint is Family, 2016, dir: LaToya Ruby Frazier

This screening of video works by artists featured in *SOFT POWER* expands ideas explored in the exhibition on the role of the artist as citizen. Many of the artists in the exhibition work across media

and are incisive makers of time-based art including sound and moving images. Profoundly nuanced and lushly depicted works by LaToya Ruby Frazier, Carlos Motta and Tuan Nguyen are grouped around the theme of water as an element that connects people through stories of resistance and violence. Works by Hassan Khan, Cinthia Marcelle and Dave McKenzie inspire thoughts on mediation or how we use technology and sound to relate to one another. The screening and discussions are an opportunity to expand our understanding of the political and creative context from which these artists' practices emerge.

Each screening will be followed by a conversation with the artists, moderated by Jamal Batts. Batts is a doctoral candidate at UC Berkeley and a member of the curatorial collective The Black Aesthetic who was the curatorial intern for *SOFT POWER*.

LATOYA RUBY FRAZIER AND THE SISTER TOUR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

PHYLLIS WATTIS THEATER AT SFMOMA

FREE admission. First come, first served.

Join artist LaToya Ruby Frazier, poets Shea Cobb (her collaborator and subject of her series *Flint is Family, Part 2*) and Amber Hasan and other invited guests of The Sister Tour (a community organization of artists from Flint, Michigan) for an afternoon of conversations, spoken word and performances in response to and as an expression of resilience to the ongoing water crisis in Flint.

JASON MORAN PERFORMANCES

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19 + JANUARY 26, 2020, 2 PM

GINA AND STUART PETERSON WHITE BOX AT SFMOMA

FREE with museum admission.

Interdisciplinary jazz pianist, visual artist and composer Jason Moran performs a selection of pieces, complementing his work for *SOFT POWER*. A 2010 MacArthur Fellow and Artistic Director for Jazz for the Kennedy Center, Moran transcends boundaries from music to visual art to literature, and mines a variety of musical styles from classical, blues and jazz, to funk and hip-hop.

BODIES AT THE BORDER SYMPOSIUM

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2020, 9 AM–6 PM

INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES, UC SANTA CRUZ

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2020, 9:30 AM–5:30 PM

PHYLLIS WATTIS THEATER AT SFMOMA

FREE admission. First come, first served.

Bodies at the Borders is a two-day symposium addressing the politics of borders as they intersect with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and race. With film screenings, poetry readings, performances and panel discussions, the symposium accompanies installations by Carlos Motta on view at SFMOMA and UC Santa Cruz.

The symposium, produced by Motta in collaboration with Rachel Nelson, UCSC Institute of the Arts and Sciences, will feature performances by Rafa Esparza and Demian DinéYazhi', film screenings of *4 Waters: Deep Implicancy* by Denise Ferreira da Silva and Arjuna Neuman and *Deseos* by Carlos Motta,

and a keynote presentation by Julio Salgado, among other speakers. *Bodies at the Borders* brings together artists, activists, poets and scholars to confront the histories and presents of migration and the production of borders as sites of inclusion and exclusion.

THE EXHIBITION

Organized by Eungie Joo, curator of contemporary art, and presented exclusively at SFMOMA on two floors of the museum, the exhibition features new and recent work by 20 international artists working in 12 countries. More than three quarters of the works in *SOFT POWER* are commissions and new works never before presented in the United States. Taken together, the works demonstrate what cultural theorist, filmmaker and catalogue contributor Manthia Diawara has called *a solidarity between intuitions*—a concept that acknowledges the complexity, darkness and opacity from which our reality emerges—the poetry and imagination of our differences. According to Joo, “Professor Diawara’s *solidarity between intuitions* expresses how specific works can enhance our understanding of others by association and relation, while maintaining their distinct contexts and content. I trust the public can relate to many of the concerns of the artists in *SOFT POWER*, and hope that his exhibition will unleash an untapped energy among us.”

“*SOFT POWER* reflects SFMOMA’s commitment to living artists and the world we share, as outlined in our new Strategic Plan,” said Neal Benezra, Helen and Charles Schwab Director of SFMOMA. “The diverse practices and perspectives represented in this exhibition embody the goals of this museum: to embrace new ideas, push boundaries and share new ways of looking at our world through the lens of contemporary art.”



The majority of works in *SOFT POWER* have never been presented in the U.S., including the four-channel video installation *The Specter of Ancestors Becoming* (2019) by **Tuan Nguyen**, co-founder of The Propeller Group. Co-produced by SFMOMA and commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation, the work explores the creation of memory and the agency that affords. Nguyen’s remarkable

collaboration with descendants of French colonial soldiers once stationed in Vietnam—*tirailleurs Sénégalais*—features stories written by three members of the Vietnamese community in Senegal. Enacting fictionalized vignettes that reveal their own imaginings and experiences, his collaborators call forward the unresolved ghosts of history, receiving them with compassion and grace.

The 15 artists' commissions for *SOFT POWER* also include five new sculptures by **Haig Aivazian** that explore the relationship between mythology and nation-building; the installation *Who's Afraid of Ideology, Part 2* by **Marwa Arsanios**; a site-responsive installation by **Dineo Seshee Bopape**; a new mural by **Minerva Cuevas** inspired by the history of Smokey the Bear and the environmental impact of fire; a sound sculpture enveloping the fourth floor by **Cevdet Ereğ**; a series of sculpture by **Hassan Khan** that echoes his concurrent solo exhibition at the Palacio de Cristal in Madrid; a performance and video by **Tanya Lukin Linklater** on encounter as a form of repatriation in collaboration with the Hearst Museum of Anthropology in Berkeley; an installation and photographic diptych by **Cinthia Marcelle** based on the traces of economic instability; a performance by **Jason Moran** in early 2020, along with a published conversation between Moran, IONE and Jessie Baird about the revolutionary power of the dream state; the first chapter of **Carlos Motta's** new project on LGBTQ Dreamers; four large-scale abstract paintings by San Francisco Art Institute alumnus **Eamon Ore-Giron**; ongoing research into the market potential of gas hydrate by **Pratchaya Phinthong**; **Xaviera Simmons'** enormous painting installation inspired by and responding to Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration Series* (1940–41); and a series of "flat" sculptures based on teepee covers by **Duane Linklater**. Highlighting the technology of mobile architecture, Linklater's new canvases patch together distant elements that comprise indigenous reality. Incorporating the ancient geometric patterns of the Omaskêko Cree, a large format inkjet printer and natural pigments that he harvests locally, Linklater produces objects masking their own purpose through their form: nonfunctioning teepee covers, now devoid of architectural purpose, but imbued with new cultural purpose.

SOFT POWER is also enlivened by several existing works, including a changing installation of five massive landscape drawings and tent from the durational performance *Drawing a Line through Landscape* by **Nikhil Chopra** at *documenta 14*; the premier of **LaToya Ruby Frazier's**, *Flint is Family, Part 2*, in which Shea Cobb and her daughter Zion escape the ongoing Flint water crisis and "return" to their inheritance in Mississippi; **Hassan Khan's** remarkable video installation *Jewel* (2010); a series of 15 banners and small abstract sculptures by **Dave McKenzie**; **Pratchaya Phinthong's** "documentation" of migrant bilberry pickers in Finnish Lapland, *Give More Than You Take* (2010); and a wall installation and sculptures by **Tavares Strachan** from his *Invisibles* series. The exhibition features two works by **Nairy Baghramian**, including *Retainer* (2013), produced for her first major exhibition in the U.S. and extending her examination of systems of power, context, architecture and the materiality of sculpture. In this work, chromed steel supports large translucent slabs of cast resin and silicon reminiscent of a dental or gynecological intervention in process, but at a scale that confronts the full body. Within the context of the exhibition, Baghramian's work suggests the temporal precision of physical states of matter, conjuring vast possibilities of adaptation, suffering and survival.

FULL LIST OF ARTISTS PRESENTED IN *SOFT POWER*

Haig Aivazian (b. 1980, Beirut, Lebanon; lives and works in Beirut)

Marwa Arsanios (b. 1978, Washington, D.C.; lives and works in Beirut)

Nairy Baghramian (b. 1971, Isfahan, Iran; lives and works in Berlin)

Dineo Seshee Bopape (b. 1981, Polokwane, South Africa; lives and works in Johannesburg)

Nikhil Chopra (b. 1974, Kolkata, India; lives and works in Goa)

Minerva Cuevas (b. 1975, Mexico City, Mexico; lives and works in Mexico City)
Cevdet Ereğ (b. 1974, Istanbul, Turkey; lives and works in Istanbul)
LaToya Ruby Frazier (b. 1982, Braddock, Pennsylvania; lives and works in Chicago)
Hassan Khan (b. 1975, London, U.K.; lives and works in Cairo)
Duane Linklater (b. 1976, Ontario, Canada; lives and works in North Bay, Ontario)
Tanya Lukin Linklater (b. 1976, Kodiak, Alaska; lives and works in North Bay, Ontario)
Cinthia Marcelle (b. 1974, Belo Horizonte, Brazil; lives and works in São Paulo)
Dave McKenzie (b. 1977, Kingston, Jamaica; lives and works in Brooklyn)
Jason Moran (b. 1975, Houston, Texas; lives and works in New York)
Carlos Motta (b. 1978, Bogotá, Colombia; lives and works in New York)
Tuan Andrew Nguyen (b. 1976, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City)
Eamon Ore-Giron (b. 1973, Tucson, Arizona; lives and works in Los Angeles)
Pratchaya Phinthong (b. 1974, Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand; lives and works in Bangkok)
Xaviera Simmons (b. 1974, New York, New York; lives and works in New York)
Tavares Strachan (b. 1979, Nassau, Bahamas; lives and works in New York)



ORGANIZATION + SUPPORT

SOFT POWER is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

SOFT POWER is dedicated to the luminous memory of our very dear friend Norah Stone.

Major support for *SOFT POWER* is provided by Shawn and Brook Byers, the Ford Foundation, Diana Nelson and John Atwater, Katie and Matt Paige, and Helen and Charles Schwab. Generous support is provided by Sabrina Buell and Yves Béhar, Sean Leffers and Tom Buttgenbach, Sir Deryck and Lady Va Maughan, and Aey Phanachet and Roger Evans. Meaningful support is provided by Alka and Ravin Agrawal, Fundación Botín, Dolly and George Chammas, Wayee Chu and Ethan Beard, Oya and Bulent

Eczacibasi, and the Friends of Contemporary Art at SFMOMA.

ABOUT EUNGIE JOO, CURATOR OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Eungie Joo joined SFMOMA in 2017 as curator of contemporary art, a newly established role that supports the museum's mission to engage with the art and artists of our time. Previously Joo was curator of Sharjah Biennial 12: *The past, the present, the possible* (2015) in the United Arab Emirates. The exhibition included the work of over 50 artists and cultural practitioners from 25 countries and featured new works, performances and site-specific commissions by 36 of those artists, including *SOFT POWER* participating artists Nikhil Chopra, Hassan Khan and Cinthia Marcelle; as well as Julie Mehretu, Damián Ortega, Taro Shinoda, Adrián Villar Rojas, Haegue Yang and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye.

Joo was Keith Haring Director and Curator of Education and Public Programs at the New Museum in New York from 2007–12, where she spearheaded the *Museum as Hub* initiative and curated the 2012 New Museum Generational Triennial, *The Ungovernables*. She was artistic director of the 5th Anyang Public Art Project/APAP 5 (2016); director of art and cultural programs at Instituto Inhotim in Brazil (2012–14); commissioner for the Korean Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009); and founding director and curator of the Gallery at REDCAT in Los Angeles (2003–7). In addition to many other distinctions, Joo received the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement in 2006. A frequent contributor to exhibition catalogues and magazines, she is editor of *Rethinking Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education* (Routledge, 2011) and co-editor of *Art Spaces Directory* (ArtAsiaPacific and New Museum, 2012). She received her doctorate in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, Berkeley.

PUBLICATION: *Soft Power: A Conversation for the Future*

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, *Soft Power: A Conversation for the Future*, with essays by artist **Marwa Arsanios** on Ecofeminism; filmmaker and cultural theorist **Manthia Diawara** on the poetic concepts of Edouard Glissant; Whitney Museum of American Art curator **Adrienne Edwards** on the state of time-based art; writer **Yasmine El-Rashidi** on the colonization of narrative; *SOFT POWER* curator **Eungie Joo** on the exhibition; and composer **Jason Moran** in conversation with playwright and poet IONE and linguist Jessie “Little Doe” Baird on dreams and their manifestations. In addition, each participating artist is profiled in a 6-8 page section featuring installation images of the exhibition and commissioned contributions by a striking lineup of curators, thinkers and writers including: **Haytham el-Wardany** on Haig Aivazian; **Athena Athanasiou** on Marwa Arsanios; **Eungie Joo** on Nairy Baghramian and Cinthia Marcelle; **Portia Mahlodi "Uhuru" Phalafala** in conversation with Dineo Seshee Bopape; **Naeem Mohaiemen** in conversation with Nikhil Chopra; **Max Haiven** on Minerva Cuevas; **Cevdet Ereğ** on his practice; **LaToya Ruby Frazier** on her project *Flint as Family*; **Hassan Khan** on the concepts at play in his work; a photo essay by **Duane Linklater**; **Magdalyn Asimakis** on Tanya Lukin-Linklater; **Meg Onli** in conversation with Dave McKenzie; **Karma Chávez** on Carlos Motta; **Jovanna Venegas** on Jason Moran; **Koyo Kouoh** in conversation with Tuan Andrew Nguyen; **Marcela Guerrero** on Eamon Ore-Giron; **Thanavi Chotpradit** on Pratchaya Phinthong; **Brian Keith Jackson** on Xaviera Simmons; and **Stamatina Gregory** on Tavares Strachan. The publication *Soft Power: A Conversation for the Future* is distributed by Rizzoli and will be available in January 2020.

HOURS AND ADMISSION

Open Friday–Tuesday 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and Thursday 10 a.m.–9 p.m. Closed Wednesday.

Adult general admission to SFMOMA is \$25; admission for seniors 65 years and older is \$22; and admission for visitors ages 19 through 24 is \$19. General admission and special exhibitions for all visitors aged 18 and younger are free.

Private guided tours and group discounts for *SOFT POWER* are available through the SFMOMA Group Sales team. Tours are one hour in length and are not included with museum admission. Tours must be booked at least two weeks in advance. For more information or to submit an inquiry, please visit sfmoma.org/groups.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 Third Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

SFMOMA is dedicated to making the art for our time a vital and meaningful part of public life. Founded in 1935 as the first West Coast museum devoted to modern and contemporary art, a thoroughly transformed SFMOMA, with triple the gallery space, an enhanced education center and new free public galleries, opened to the public on May 14, 2016. Since its inaugural year, the expanded museum has welcomed more than one million visitors annually.

Visit sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jill Lynch, jlynch@sfmoma.org, 415.357.4172
Clara Hatcher Baruth, chatcher@sfmoma.org, 415.357.4177
Emma LeHocky, elehocky@sfmoma.org, 415.357.4170

** Follow us on Twitter @SFMOMA_Press for real-time announcements and updates **

IMAGE CREDITS:

Tanya Lukin Linklater with Liz Lott, *The treaty is in the body*, 2017; courtesy the artist and Winnipeg Art Gallery; © Tanya Lukin Linklater

Nairy Baghramian, *Retainer*, 2013 (installation view 2013, SculptureCenter, New York); courtesy the artist

Nikhil Chopra, *Drawing a Line through the Landscape*, 2017 (production view, Bratislava); courtesy the artist, Chatterjee & Lal and Galleria Continua; photo: Madhavi Gore