

Institute of Contemporary University Art of Pennsylvania

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ICA Announces Three Major Exhibitions for Its 2019 Winter Season

Emerging and Established Contemporary Artists Pioneer New Discourse Exploring Race, History, and Time in Innovative Three-Part Exhibition *Colored People Time*

Retrospective of Tony Conrad Spanning Six Decades of Seminal Work

First Major Solo Exhibition of Cecilia Vicuña

Philadelphia, PA, October 11, 2018 – This winter, the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania will mount three exhibitions that challenge convention and offer alternative narratives for reframing and responding to social and political issues. Exhibitions include: the debut chapter of a pioneering three-part exhibition that aims to build new public discourse around the everyday experiences of black Americans; a retrospective dedicated to avant-garde artist Tony Conrad spanning six decades of his radical and experimental practice, encompassing videos, sculptures, and installations; and the first major solo exhibition of Chilean poet, activist, and artist Cecilia Vicuña, which will examine how her fluid and cross-disciplinary approach interrogates timely social topics, such as feminism, ecological destruction, and cultural homogenization.

“We are thrilled to present this incredible range of thought-provoking exhibitions and to create a space for our audiences that confronts some of the most pressing issues of our time, fostering dialogue around pre-established notions on race and culture,” said Amy Sadao, Director of ICA. “The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania remains committed to being at the forefront of representing topical, relevant, and fearless programming that champions under-represented artists and perspectives that break boundaries. This winter, we look forward to envisioning a new future of black cultural production, experiencing new definitions of radical deconstruction and experimentation through a survey dedicated to Tony Conrad’s influential sixty year-career, and gaining deeper insight into the visionary process behind Cecilia Vicuña’s approach to creating positive social change through her practice.”

Colored People Time: Mundane Futures, Introducing Tony Conrad: A Retrospective, and Cecilia Vicuña: About to Happen will open on February 1, 2019. More information on each exhibition follows below.

Colored People Time: Mundane Futures, Quotidian Pasts, and Banal Presents

Launching February 1, 2019

Conceived by Meg Onli, assistant curator at ICA, *Colored People Time* challenges the traditional exhibitions

structure and format to initiate a profound exploration into the banal and everyday ways in which the history of slavery and colonialism permeates the present and impacts the future. Broken into three separate chapters—*Mundane Futures*, *Quotidian Pasts*, and *Banal Presents*—which will open consecutively over the course of 2019, the exhibition explores how the subjugation of black people in America was not only part of our country's foundation, but exists within our present moment, and shapes our future. *Colored People Time* will feature a range of emerging and established artists including Aria Dean, Kevin Jerome Everson, Matthew Angelo Harrison, Carolyn Lazard, Dave McKenzie, Martine Syms, Sable Elyse Smith, and Cameron Rowland.

On view from February 1 – March 31, 2019, the first chapter of the exhibition, *Mundane Futures*, aims to develop a discourse around the future of black cultural production. Attempting to look beyond science fiction and fantasy, the exhibition will peer into a future focused on the ordinary through the lens of four contemporary artists: Martine Syms, Kevin Jerome Everson, Aria Dean and Dave McKenzie. Syms' film *The Mundane Afrofuturist Manifesto* (2015) will create a loose framework for the exhibition that imagines a future as a continuation of the present, comprised of banal and ordinary experiences in a society that continues to struggle with white supremacy and racial injustice. The exhibition seeks to ground Sym's thinking with two historic texts: Sutton Griggs' 1899 black dystopian novel *Imperium in Imperio*, and The Ten-Point Program published in the 1972 issue of *The Black Panther*. Both literary works will contextualize the mundane future within the past, creating a tangible link that ties the concept to the history of blackness in America.

From April 26 through August 11, *Quotidian Pasts*, will examine the complexities of collecting and displaying African objects. The exhibition, co-curated with anthropologist Monique Scott and featuring new work by Matthew Angelo Harrison, is presented in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. The final exhibition chapter, *Banal Presents*, on view September 13 – December 22, will feature new and recent work by Sable Elyse Smith and Cameron Rowland and a newly commissioned work by Carolyn Lazard.

Colored People Time is organized by ICA Assistant Curator Meg Onli and will be accompanied by a catalogue published in the form of a reader.

Introducing Tony Conrad: A Retrospective

February 1 – August 11, 2019

Introducing Tony Conrad: A Retrospective marks the first large-scale museum survey devoted entirely to pieces originally presented by the artist in museum and gallery settings. A pioneering artist who helped define the American avant-garde in the 1960s, Conrad challenged barriers between different mediums through radical deconstruction and experimentation. The exhibition offers a unique opportunity to experience six decades of Conrad's work. Exhibiting a wide range of significant pieces, the presentation will expand and deepen an understanding of his experimental and ground-breaking practice, which has historically been associated with his contributions to minimal music and structural film in the 1960s. Bringing together sculpture, painting, film, video, and installation, *Introducing Tony Conrad* will create a sensory experience that invokes the participatory and performative approach of the artist. Spoken, written, and performed introductions originally created by Conrad to help frame screenings and presentations will be woven into the space, creating a level of active engagement that both breaks down and invites an unprecedented reexamination of the boundaries between artistic categories.

Key pieces include *H*, 1965, *Yellow Movie* (video), 1973, *Panopticon*, 1988 and a selection of his Invented

Acoustical Tools. The exhibition will be accompanied by screenings and performances. *Introducing Tony Conrad: A Retrospective* is organized by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Its presentation at ICA was organized by Daniel and Brett Sundheim Chief Curator Anthony Elms.

Cecilia Vicuña: About to Happen

February 1 – March 31, 2019

Marking the first major solo exhibition of influential Chilean-born artist Cecilia Vicuña, the multidisciplinary presentation will offer unprecedented insight into the evolution of her practice through a range of landmark works, including sculpture, video, text, performance, and site-specific installations, drawn from the past four decades of her career. A poet, artist, filmmaker, and human rights activist, Vicuña operates fluidly between concept and craft, text and textile to draw attention to pressing social and political issues, transforming her pieces into topical vehicles of engagement with economic and environmental disparities and the reclamation of ancestral traditions.

The exhibition will re-frame dematerialization as more than a formal consequence of 1960s conceptualism but also as an artistic response to radical climate change. The extraordinary range of pieces featured in the exhibition will illuminate how Vicuña’s approach blends overlapping discourses of conceptual art, land art, poetry, and feminist art practices. Highlights include:

- A large selection of pieces from her seminal *precario* sculpture series, which Vicuña began assembling from pieces of wood, thread, and other found objects at the beginning of her career in 1966 as a form of political resistance to the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet;
- Quipus, an ancient method of South American record-keeping through knotted cords that Vicuña reimagines and reinvents through a mix of organic and industrial materials.

Cecilia Vicuña: About to Happen is co-organized by Andrea Andersson, The Helis Foundation Chief Curator of the Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans and Julia Bryan-Wilson, Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley. Organized at ICA by Assistant Curator Meg Onli.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania is a non-collecting institution presenting exhibitions at the forefront of contemporary practice and culture that challenge audiences to think in new ways. The ICA is free for all to engage and connect with the art of our time. Since its founding in 1963, ICA has served as a laboratory for the new, introducing and supporting the production of urgent and important contemporary art, beginning with ICA’s inaugural show of paintings by Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still, followed by the first museum show of works by Andy Warhol in 1965. Throughout its history, ICA has been instrumental in identifying and developing many promising artists before they attained prominence within the international art world, some of whom include—in addition to Warhol—Laurie Anderson, Richard Artschwager, Vija Celmins, Karen Kilimnik, Barry Le Va, Glenn Ligon, Robert Mapplethorpe, Agnes Martin, Pepón Osorio, Tavares Strachan, and Cy Twombly.

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