

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART



AGAMEMNOMICS, 2013; Toy pieces: glass, wood, clay, porcelain, plastic, acrylic, rubber, ink, and paint; Display case: steel, glass, acrylic glass, and wood; 354.33 x 39.37 x 31.5 inches

Beta Space: Pae White

July 18, 2019 – January 19, 2020

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The work of internationally renowned artist Pae White transcends nearly all traditional boundaries—between art and design, craft and fine art, architecture and installation, theory and practice. Her probing curiosity with the world manifests in her transformation of ordinary objects and phenomena—chandeliers, clocks, popcorn, tapestries, birdsongs, fog, smoke—into exhilarating experiences that defy logic yet remain oddly familiar. Always kinaesthetic—as much a bodily as visual experience that plays with the senses—her work is as alluring as it is ambiguous, suggesting that things may not be as they may seem. The handmade nature of her work, combined with sophisticated technologies and inventive processes, allow for a high degree of improvisation.

In celebration of SJMA's 50th anniversary, White will present a compendium of new works and recent installations for the sixth iteration of the Museum's exhibition series "Beta Space." White's peripatetic practice across various media and disciplines captures the spirit of this series: her work brims with artistic risk taking and experimentation, qualities that resonate with the wildly creative and innovate ethos of Silicon Valley.



foreverago, 2017; Cotton, lurex, polyester, cashmere, silver, aluminum, and lead; 8 ¼ x 127 feet

Beta Space: Pae White will feature newly made artworks that further White's interest in shifting our associations and perceptions of everyday objects, materials, and phenomena. In addition, the exhibition will feature two monumental installations that upend traditional ideas regarding architecture, museum display practices, fine art, and craft.

foreverago (2017) is the artist's largest tapestry to date, at 127 feet long. Shown in the United States for the first time, it will meander through the gallery, creating a sinuous wall-like structure that presents

both the front and back of the weaving. Revolutionizing the genre of tapestry for the 21st century, White relied on the help of skilled artisans while employing advanced digital imaging techniques to weave together colorful cotton, cashmere, and metallic threads, and used custom software that randomizes distribution patterns to produce her seemingly chaotic scene. Part of the artist's ongoing series "Bugz + Drugs," *foreverago* explodes with a cacophony of insects—ladybugs, dragonflies, grasshoppers, and crickets—descending on plants known for their psychoactive, calming effects: mushrooms, poppies, and cannabis. Renderings of antique Japanese kimono fabric samples and Byzantine icons further enhances an already rich and visually abundant composition.

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Detail, *AGAMEMNOMICS*, 2013

In her intuitive approach to materials and images, White maintains a critical eye on popular manifestations and wildly kitsch derivatives of high modernist ideals. In *AGAMEMNOMICS* (2013), she presents a massive assemblage of chess pieces of her own device. While scouring the design collections of the MAK Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna, the artist encountered a trove of forgotten toys made by an unknown Viennese designer in the 1920s. From this group she fashioned a chess set and sent images of nine objects to artisans and fabricators in China, Ethiopia, Germany, Lithuania, and Mexico, as well as to artists working in the Los Angeles area. Each workshop rendered interpretations of these objects in materials of their own specialty: glass, wood, clay, porcelain, plastic, and rubber. Leaving her project to chance and spontaneity, White rescued these toys from the confines of the design archive and cast them back into realms of the imagination and play.

The exhibition will also feature newly made artworks that further White's interest in shifting our associations and perceptions of everyday objects, materials, and phenomena.

Pae White

Born in 1963 in Pasadena, California, Los Angeles-based artist Pae White received her BA from Scripps College, Claremont, California in 1985 and MFA from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena in 1991. She received a City of Los Angeles (COLA) Fellowship in 2003 and a Getty Mid-career Fellowship in 2009. Her solo exhibitions include Saarland Museum, Germany (2017); Le Stanze del Vetro, Venice, Italy (2017); Henry Art Gallery, Seattle (2015); Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia (2012); Art Institute of Chicago (2011); Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri (2010); Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Arizona (2008); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC (2007); and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2004). Her public art projects include Metro Rapid Line, Los Angeles County; Oslo Opera House, Norway; and Tom Bradley International Terminal at Los Angeles International Airport. Contributions to publication design include *Extreme Abstraction* (2005); *Ex-Machina*, with Jorge Pardo (2002); and *Jorge Pardo* (1997). Her advertising projects and magazine cover designs have been featured in *Art in America*, *Art issues*, *Artforum*, *frieze*, and *make*. Her work is in the collections of the Hammer Museum of Art; Henry Art Gallery; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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About Beta Space

The exhibition series “Beta Space” takes its cue from the legendary Silicon Valley garage: it is a work in progress, resourceful, experimental, and innovative. These projects are purposefully intended to be the opposite of exhibitions planned years in advance. “Beta Space” is a place to encourage artistic experimentation, to incubate ideas, and to foster creative opportunities as well as links within our community.

Launched in 2011, “Beta Space” addresses several priorities for SJMA: to closely connect its audiences with artists and with the artistic process; to showcase the cross-disciplinary interests of many contemporary artists; to foster timely collaborations; and to reflect the diversity and innovative spirit of Silicon Valley. “Beta Space” encourages artists to experiment and venture into new areas by creating new work commissioned by SJMA for the exhibition. Invited artists work collaboratively with the exhibition curator to develop and refine ideas and content for the exhibition.

Previous Projects from the Series

Beta Space: Ruben Ochoa and Kevin Appel

March 26 through August 14, 2011

Ruben Ochoa invited his mentor Kevin Appel to imagine alternative urban spaces and domestic habitats. Ochoa suspended massive concrete forms and metal fence posts from the gallery ceiling, while Appel created hypothetical architectural interventions in the landscape by painting over images taken from nature magazines. The exhibition brought the two artists together for an artistic “conversation” to imagine alternative urban spaces and domestic habitats. Appel and Ochoa made viewers increasingly aware of the powerful social and psychological implications of our everyday experiences in the built environment.

Beta Space: Anna Sew Hoy

August 27, 2011 through February 26, 2012

Anna Sew Hoy created a magical, anecdotal environment using discarded electronic equipment, including keyboards, DSL cords, and computer mice. Drawn to the idea of space junk or e-waste, Sew Hoy partnered with Green Mouse Recycling, a San Jose-based Silicon Valley e-waste recycling company where she sourced materials for her work. Her installation of handmade

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sculptures and found objects—many of which are no longer useful—pointed towards a daily ritual of making and using hand-crafted things, while acknowledging industrialization and mass consumption.

Beta Space: Ranu Mukherjee: Telling Fortunes

August 18, 2012 through January 13, 2013

Ranu Mukherjee explored the idea of the contemporary nomad in Silicon Valley. Fascinated by the experience of repeated relocation that is common for so many of us today, Mukherjee spent six months collecting images and stories of relocation from a variety of sources in the region including immigrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan, and worshippers at local Buddhist temples. Via painting, digital animation, and photography, Mukherjee transformed this crowd-sourced material into dazzling hybrid films—combinations of colorful digital animations and the artist's own photography—that explored how the valley was shaped by the generations of nomads who have called it home.

Beta Space: Diana Thater

March 13 through September 13, 2015

Inspired by a recent scientific study that revealed how dung beetles use the Milky Way for nocturnal orientation, Diana Thater developed an entirely new kind of film and video installation to ponder humanity's relationship with the universe and to convey aesthetically the sublime aspects of the cosmic imagination. She sought advice from Dr. Puragra GuhaThakurta, professor of astronomy and astrophysics at the University of California, Santa Cruz and UCO/Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton, who gave her a the selection of animations of the Milky Way and deep space, created from scientific observations of the universe generated primarily with the Hubble Space Telescope. Her project revealed the similarities between art and science—both disciplines require observation and thought, a leap of faith, and a moment of grace.

Beta Space: Victor Cartagena

March 17 through September 4, 2017

Victor Cartagena explored the historical relationship in Salinas Valley between sugar workers of the past and the plight of migrant farm laborers today. He collaborated with the Salinas chapter of the United Farm Workers Foundation to create large-scale installations and sugar masks that

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highlighted the lives and stories of the people who work in fields that produce food for major population centers across the United States. Cartagena also analyzed outdated labor policies that restrict the rights of migrant farm workers in a kinetic, 80-foot long mural where human-scale “paper dolls” enacted a choreographed dance of bureaucratic chaos.

About SJMA

Founded by artists and community leaders in 1969, the San José Museum of Art is recognized nationally for its exploratory approach to modern and contemporary art, its participatory philosophy of arts education, and its commitment to making challenging art accessible to the public. SJMA presents nine to eleven exhibitions annually and offers more than sixty public programs.

Mission Statement

The San José Museum of Art reflects the diverse cultures and innovative spirit of Silicon Valley. Through its exhibitions, programs, scholarship, and collections, SJMA connects the present and the past, the art of the West Coast and the world. SJMA fosters awareness of artists’ broad contributions to society and engages audiences with the art of our time and the vitality of the creative process.

Vision Statement

The San José Museum of Art will be the preeminent modern and contemporary art museum in Silicon Valley. As the largest provider of arts education in Santa Clara County, it will provide dynamic learning opportunities for adults as well as vital educational services for youths and families. It will be recognized internationally for high-quality programs, fresh collaborative endeavors, and its distinctive permanent collection. SJMA will connect art and life; work across cultural boundaries; and promote deeper awareness, enjoyment, and knowledge of modern and contemporary art, architecture, and design.