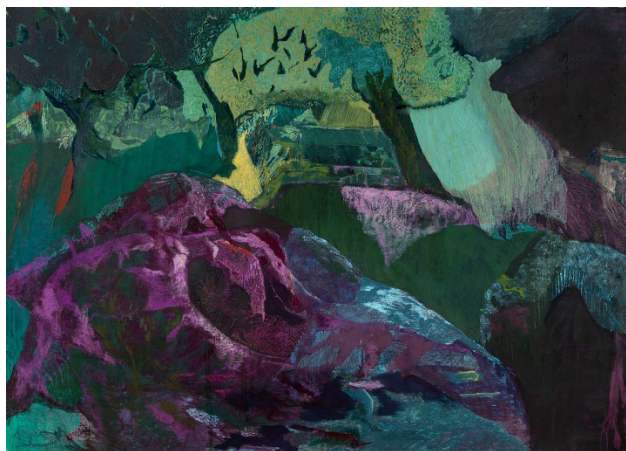




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Left: Gisela Colón, *Skewed Square (Phosphorus)*, 2022. Blow-molded acrylic. SBMA, Gift of Eugene Fu. © Gisela Colón. Image courtesy of the artist and Efrain Lopez Co. Right: Mimi Lauter, *Sense Four*, 2009. Soft pastel, oil pastel, color pencil, oil paint on paper. SBMA, Gift of Marc Selwyn, Los Angeles. © Mimi Lauter

## **Santa Barbara Museum of Art Presents *In the Making: Contemporary Art at SBMA***

On View July 21, 2024 – March 9, 2025

*July 15, 2024* — Since first opening its doors in 1941, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art (SBMA) has been a platform for contemporary artists. With artworks dating from 1965 to 2023, *In the Making* is an expansive take on an evolving collection and illustrates the impossible task of pinning down the contemporary, which is never still. Nearly a century ago, Gertrude Stein is reported to have said that “You can be a museum, or you can be modern, but you can’t be both.” However, if you admit that a contemporary collection can only ever be “in the making,” or always in formation, then there is a way out of Stein’s dead end. A museum can be modern, but only if it commits to continuous growth and change.

Cutting across seven decades, this exhibition provocatively mixes artists rarely seen together and reveals their shared preoccupations with optical effects, fantastic otherworldly landscapes, allegory and history to unlock national and ethnic identities, abstract painting’s expressive power, and the aesthetic appeal of mathematical graphs and constructions. Artworks from 50 years ago that can no longer be called contemporary sit alongside those from the 2020s.

One thread that links artists in this show is a shared interest in optics and optical effects, whether the iridescent luminosity of Gisela Colon’s *Skewed Square (Phosphorus)* (2022), or the eye-twisting moire

effect in Eduardo MacIntyre's painting *Tramas sobre negro* (1965), or Jesús Rafael Soto's untitled mobile sculpture from 1970. Garth Weiser's huge blue painting *Trends and Predictions for the Year* (2012) conjures these same dizzying effects by removing layers of paint.

The landscapes in this exhibition all seem to arise out of a careful rendering of parts of the natural world with their beautifully crafted details, but these landscapes all have an element of reality stretching fiction if not outright fantasy. Mimi Lauter gives us an impossibly lush and dense garden, while Whitney Bedford's florescent colors seem to be out of a feverish dream. Jane Dickson's view of a Los Angeles bungalow at dusk is full of dark portents, as if something terrible was about to happen. Marc Handelman's violet mountainscape looks like a film negative or x-ray and alludes to repressed histories in America. A landscape can also be sculpted. Elliott Hundley's *tearing flesh from bone* (2011) is a tree made with metal leaves, mattress springs, rope, and goats' hooves.



Left: Daniel Lind-Ramos, *Figura Emisaria*, 2020. Steel, palm tree branches, dried coconuts, branches, palm tree trunks, wood panels, burlap, concrete blocks, glass aluminum, fabric, lights. SBMA, Museum purchase with funds provided by Kandy Budgor; Luria/Budgor Family Foundation. © Daniel Lind-Ramos Image courtesy of the artist and The Ranch, Montauk. Right: York Chang, *Sedition*, 2022. Archival inkjet on transparent film. SBMA, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Contemporary Art Acquisitions Fund. © York Chang

Assemblage is another thread that binds *In the Making* together. Daniel Lind-Ramos uses found objects sourced from his Afro-Caribbean community in Puerto Rico to build *Figura Emisaria* (2020), a conduit for communication to another realm. In a work from 1967, Sidney Gordin uses cutout pieces of painted wood to make what feels like an abstract painting that has been pulled into the third dimension. In *Memories of Kemi* (1974), Betye Saar arranges wooden birds, tooled leather, feathers, and a velvet jewelry box to evoke a memory.

The questions of national identity and history is another topic with which artists in the exhibition grapple. Hailing from Mexico, Rafael Perea de la Cabada in *Agua bendita* (2000) uses a Mexican flag and Coca-Cola bottles to satirize the media portrayals of Vicente Fox, the former Mexican president. Vian Sora's haunting landscape alludes to the deserts and oases of Iraq, where she was born.

The abstractions of Albert Contreras, Pierre Soulages, Catherine Lee, and Sean Scully are all examples of the power of abstraction to convey ideas. Soulages conveying a deep emotional energy, while Contreras, Lee, and Scully use repetition to force a meditative state that encourages careful looking to see minute difference in paint marks that initially appear identical.

Finally, York Chang and Jenny Holzer combine words and images, and they both work with the captions, titles, and word tags that are ubiquitous in our media saturated environment. Chang takes printed

newspapers and partially covers titles and photographs to block our ability to read them, making them paradoxical and mysterious, while Holzer slaps an ominous warning on a anonymous granite bench turning it into a tombstone.

The exhibition includes works from SBMA's collection, including Daniel Lind-Ramos, Pierre Soulages, Al Held, Jesus Rafael Soto, Eduardo MacIntyre, Gisela Colon, Rafael Perea de la Cabada, Garth Weiser, Sidney Gordin, Albert Contreras, Jenny Holzer, Betye Saar, Mimi Lauter, York Chang, Jane Dickson, Vian Sora, Whitney Bedford, Elliott Hundley, and Marc Handelman. There is one loan, a black and white painting made by Catherine Lee and Sean Scully as a collaboration.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is one of the finest museums on the West coast and is celebrated for the superb quality of its permanent collection. Its mission is to integrate art into the lives of people through internationally recognized exhibitions and special programs, as well as the thoughtful presentation of its permanent collection.

**Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA**

**Open Tuesday – Sunday 11 am to 5 pm, 1<sup>st</sup> Thursdays 5 – 8 pm**

**805.963.4364 [www.sbma.net](http://www.sbma.net)**

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