

BAMPFA to Honor Cheryl Dunye and Trevor Paglen at 2025 Art and Film Benefit



Annual Celebration Will Be Held at BAMPFA on Saturday, May 10

(Berkeley, CA) January 23, 2025—The Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive announced today that its 2025 fundraising benefit will pay tribute to **Cheryl Dunye** and **Trevor Paglen**, two singular visionaries in the fields of art and film. Dunye and Paglen are the latest pair of honorees to be celebrated at BAMPFA’s annual Art and Film Benefit, an event that reflects the museum’s unique dual dedication to art and film by honoring one artist and one filmmaker each year. Proceeds from the benefit support the full scope of BAMPFA’s mission, with a particular focus on the museum’s student engagement programs.

“With their groundbreaking work and strong ties to the Bay Area, we are thrilled to recognize Cheryl Dunye and Trevor Paglen this year,” said BAMPFA’s Executive Director, Julie Rodrigues

Widholm. “Both of these important artists make visible what has historically been invisible which truly changes the way we see the world around us.”

To help BAMPFA honor these two accomplished individuals, the museum will continue its practice of hosting distinguished tribute speakers who are deeply familiar with the honorees and their work. Dunye’s tribute speech will be delivered by **Justin Simien**, the award-winning writer and director of the acclaimed independent film *Dear White People* (2014) and its eponymous Netflix spinoff; and Paglen’s speech will be delivered by **Cindy Cohn**, the pioneering civil liberties attorney and executive director of the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

The 2025 Art and Film Benefit marks the fourth installment of this new fundraising model for BAMPFA, which last year honored the artist Lynn Hershman Leeson and the experimental filmmaker Sky Hopinka. That event raised more than \$730,000 from a roster of more than 200 generous attendees, including honorees Lynn Hershman Leeson and Sky Hopinka, as well as a vibrant slate of artists and filmmakers, including Sadie Barnett, Sofía Córdova, Marta Thoma Hall, Cathy Park Hong, Mildred Howard, Masako Miki, Ruby Neri, Michelle Pred, Lucy Puls, Rupy C. Tut, and Catherine Wagner.

This year’s Art and Film Benefit will highlight the impact of attendees’ charitable giving on supporting the student experience at BAMPFA. BAMPFA has a deep commitment to serving UC Berkeley students through educational, programmatic, and professional development opportunities—including its work study program, the largest of its kind on the Berkeley campus. Members of the BAMPFA Student Committee—a student-led organization dedicated to advancing the museum’s mission—are invited to attend the gala, and a representative from the Student Committee will be featured in the event’s speaking program.

This year’s host committee for the Art and Film Benefit features a distinguished roster of luminaries, including Claudia Altman-Siegel, Margarita Gandia, Wendi Norris, Annie Perrin, Favianna Rodriguez, Charmin Roundtree-Baaqee, Tiffany Shlain and Ken Goldberg, Anton Stuebner, Roselyne C. Swig, and Erica Tanov.

BERKELEY ART MUSEUM AND PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE

2120 Oxford St #2250 Berkeley CA 94720 bampfa.org

More information about the 2025 Art and Film Benefit will be announced in the coming weeks, including the VIP speakers who will pay tribute to Dunye and Paglen. To learn more and purchase tickets, visit bampfa.org/benefit.

About the Honorees

Cheryl Dunye

Iconic Black queer director, writer, and producer Cheryl Dunye first gained recognition for her influential contributions to the 1990s Queer New Wave. Her innovative short films and videos, and groundbreaking screwball comedy *The Watermelon Woman* combine talking head documentary techniques, sharp and distinctive screenwriting, excellent performances, humor, and pathos to depict Black and lesbian identities, desire, and relationships. Working with a variety of moving image media, Dunye employs the affective resonance of distinct photographic textures to evoke time, place, and emotion. *The Watermelon Woman* also counters cinema history's lack of diversity with a fictional archive standing in for the lost or untold stories of Dunye's Black and queer ancestors in the industry. Winner of the Teddy Award for Best Feature at the 1996 Berlin International Film Festival, *The Watermelon Woman* was restored and re-released in 2016 and named to the Library of Congress's National Film Registry in 2021. Dunye's second feature *Stranger Inside*, which depicts power dynamics, filial longing, and racial conflict in a women's prison, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2001 and was nominated for four Independent Spirit Awards including Best Director. Her other feature films include *My Baby's Daddy* (2004), *The Owls* (2010), and *Mommy Is Coming* (2012). In 2016, Dunye was invited to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and named a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in the field of Filmmaking. Dunye lives in the Bay Area and recently founded the Oakland-based production company Jingtletown Films. She has garnered acclaim for directing episodic television including: OWN's *Queen Sugar*, TNT's *Claws*, Freeform's *The Fosters*, OWN's *Love Is*, Showtime's *The Chi*, Netflix's *Dear White People*, CBS's *All Rise*, HBO's *Lovecraft Country*, and Netflix's *Bridgerton*.

BAMPFA has a long history of screening Dunye's work starting in 1995 with the program *Dunyementaries: The Videos of Cheryl Dunye*. *The Watermelon Woman* screened in 1998, in 2019

BERKELEY ART MUSEUM AND PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE

2120 Oxford St #2250 Berkeley CA 94720 bampfa.org

as part of *No Regrets: A Celebration of Marlon Riggs*, and in the 2023 series *Pioneers of Queer Cinema*. Co-directed with Ellen Spiro, *DiAna's Hair Ego REMIX* screened as part of the *African Film Festival* in 2020. *Stranger Inside* screened at BAMPFA in 2001 and in 2025 will be featured in *Masc II: Mascos plus "Muchachas"*.

Born in Liberia and raised in Philadelphia, Dunye received a B.A. from Temple University, and an M.F.A. from Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts. A dedicated educator, she has taught at UCLA, UC Santa Cruz, Pitzer College, Claremont Graduate University, Pomona College, California Institute of the Arts, The New School of Social Research, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and San Francisco State University.

Trevor Paglen

Trevor Paglen is widely recognized for his photographs, films, and writings that investigate theoretical questions around vision, technology, and notions of truth. Informed by his education in experimental geography, Paglen's artistic practice draws on deep research and investigative journalism. In his photographs, he documents sites often obscured from public knowledge, whether secret military bases omitted from maps or internet cables buried beneath the ocean. His images often bring a new awareness to the politics of surveillance, as in his photographs of drones flying within seemingly romantic landscapes. Paglen's work addresses rapid developments in technology, examining the biases and potentials of artificial intelligence and computer vision. In a culture increasingly shaped by manipulated media and disinformation, Paglen scrutinizes the invisible forces within the visible world.

Based between New York and Berlin, Paglen has deep ties to Berkeley and the San Francisco Bay Area. He received a BA from UC Berkeley, an MFA from the School of Art Institute of Chicago, and a PhD in Geography from UC Berkeley. He has been included in several exhibitions at BAMPFA, including his first solo museum exhibition, *MATRIX 255 / Trevor Paglen: The Other Night Sky* (2008) in addition to group exhibitions and public programs. He has had solo exhibitions at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington D.C.; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Fondazione Prada, Milan; the Barbican Centre, London; Vienna Secession, Vienna; and Protocinema Istanbul, among others. His work has been included in group

exhibitions internationally, including at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Tate Modern. Paglen is the recipient of several awards, including the Electronic Frontier Foundation's Pioneer Award, the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize, and the Nam June Paik Art Center Prize. In 2017, Paglen was named a MacArthur Fellow.

About BAMPFA

Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) ignites cultural change for a more inclusive and artistic world. BAMPFA has been uniquely dedicated to art and film since 1970, with international programming that is locally connected and globally relevant. It holds more than 25,000 artworks and 18,000 films and videos in its collection, with particular strengths in modern and contemporary art and historical Chinese painting, as well as the world's largest collection of African American quilts. As part of the University of California, Berkeley, BAMPFA is committed to artistic diversity through its robust slate of art exhibitions, film screenings, artist talks, live performances, and educational programs that shed new light on the art of the past and connect audiences with leading filmmakers and artists of our time. BAMPFA sits on the edge of campus and downtown Berkeley, where it welcomes visitors from across and beyond the Bay Area in a repurposed building designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro.

For more information, contact A. J. Fox, Public Relations Manager

afox@berkeley.edu

O: (510) 642-0365 / C: (347) 771-7152

BERKELEY ART MUSEUM AND PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE

2120 Oxford St #2250 Berkeley CA 94720 bampfa.org