

BAMPFA Commissions New Body of Work from Young Joon Kwak for the Artist's Solo Museum Debut

***MATRIX 285 / Young Joon Kwak: Resistance Pleasure* Marks Latest
Installment in BAMPFA's Acclaimed MATRIX Series of Contemporary Art**

On View from August 7 through December 15, 2024



(Berkeley, CA) July 18, 2024—The Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) will unveil a new exhibition of a commissioned installation by the Los Angeles-based artist Young Joon Kwak. Kwak's immersive sculptural installation marks the latest MATRIX exhibition, a signature contemporary art series at BAMPFA that provides artists with an experimental platform to make and show new work.

For their first solo museum exhibition, Kwak presents a series of works exploring new ways to imagine and represent the human form. The show is anchored by three sculptures, each composed of a series of fragmented body parts made using a mixture of resin, metal, and other synthetic and organic materials. Cast from the artist's own body and those of their friends and collaborators, these individual forms come together in dynamic sculptures that present the body in states of transformation. The exhibition also presents two new neon sculptures, a drawing, and a musical

score. *Resistance Pleasure* transforms the gallery into an immersive environment where familiar forms and postures are presented in a new light, advancing the artist's longstanding exploration of perception and performance in relation to the body.

Like much of Kwak's work, *Resistance Pleasure* sits at the intersection of sculpture and performance, figuration and abstraction, reflecting the artist's interest in the boundaries of representation particularly as they pertain to the bodies of queer and trans people. Kwak's practice is deeply



influenced by their experiences in queer nightlife, and in particular their collaborations with Mutant Salon, an itinerant arts platform and beauty salon they founded with other artists and performers. Widely exhibited in Los Angeles, New York, and internationally, Kwak's MATRIX exhibition marks their most significant Bay Area presentation to date.

With their solo exhibition at BAMPFA, Kwak joins nearly three hundred artists who have shown their work in the MATRIX series over the past five decades, including Nan Goldin, Alfredo Jaar, Julie Mehretu, Adrian Piper, Martin Puryear, and Cecilia Vicuña, among many others. MATRIX was established at BAMPFA in 1978 as one of the first programs at a US museum to showcase changing exhibitions of contemporary art, giving artists a crucial platform to expand their creative practices in new ways. The series is currently being revitalized under the leadership of a new curatorial team that joined BAMPFA last year, including Chief Curator Margot Norton, Phyllis C. Wattis Senior Curator Victoria Sung, and Senior Curator Anthony Graham, who curated *MATRIX 285 / Young Joon Kwak: Resistance Pleasure*.

"In this incredible new series of work, Young Joon Kwak proposes new ways of thinking about the body, committed to understanding how all of us are always growing, changing, and

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transforming,” said Graham. “This interest in mutability extends to the formal aspects of their practice, too, embracing abstraction to render the human body in new ways. Transforming the gallery into a space that is both contemplative and celebratory, Kwak prompts us to reconsider our sense of self and how we relate to one another, creating a space where we might imagine new ways of being and belonging.”

In conjunction with the exhibition opening, Kwak will speak about their work in conversation with Graham at BAMPFA on Wednesday, August 7 at 6 PM. Kwak will discuss the development of the project and how they use material and form to reconsider traditional expectations of representation. The conversation is free with gallery admission; for more information, visit bampfa.org.

About Young Joon Kwak

Young Joon Kwak (b. 1984, Queens, New York) received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2007, an MA from the University of Chicago in 2010, and an MFA from the University of Southern California in 2014. Kwak is the founder of Mutant Salon, a roving beauty salon and platform for collaborative performances and installations with their community of queer/trans/POC artists and performers. Kwak is also lead performer in the electronic-dance-noise band Xina Xurner. Their work has been shown in solo exhibitions at Arko Art Center, Seoul (2022); Korean Cultural Center, Los Angeles (2021); Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles (2021, 2017, 2016, 2014); Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (2018); and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre, Alberta, Canada (2018). Group exhibitions and performances include those at Hauser & Wirth, New York (2021); Antenna Space, Shanghai (2019); CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2019); 47 Canal, New York (2018); Anonymous Gallery, Mexico City (2018); Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá (2018); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016); The Broad, Los Angeles (2016); and Le Pavillon Vendôme–Centre d’Art Contemporain, Clichy, France (2016).

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,

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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 our 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.

Exhibition Credits

MATRIX 285 / Young Joon Kwak: Resistance Pleasure is curated by Anthony Graham, Senior Curator.

The exhibition is part of BAMPFA's ongoing MATRIX series of contemporary art exhibitions. Founded in 1978, MATRIX provides artists with an experimental platform to make and show new work.

MATRIX exhibitions are made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Wattis.

Image credits

1. Young Joon Kwak, *Circle Dance of Divine Queer Futures* [detail], 2022. Urethane resin, copper tubing, and rhinestones, 48 x 48 x 6 in. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Paul Salveson.
2. Young Joon Kwak; courtesy of the artist.

Visitor Information

Hours

Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tickets

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2120 Oxford St #2250 Berkeley CA 94720 bampfa.org

\$14 general admission

\$12 non-UC Berkeley students, disabled, 65+

FREE BAMPFA members; UC Berkeley students, faculty, staff; 18 and under; one adult per child
13 and under; and artists in the BAMPFA collection/MATRIX

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