

Exhibition: *Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler: Flora*

On View: January 20–April 7, 2019

Location: Resnick Pavilion



Image caption on page 4

(Los Angeles—December 4, 2018) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is pleased to present *Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler: Flora*, the U.S. premiere of the artists' film installation and the accompanying work, *Bust*. The work is based on the artist duo Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler's discoveries about the unknown American artist Flora Mayo, with whom the Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti had a love affair in Paris in the 1920s. While Giacometti is one of the most celebrated artists of the 20th century, Mayo's oeuvre has been destroyed and her biography was relegated to a footnote in Giacometti scholarship. Hubbard / Birchler reframe this history, using a feminist perspective to bring Mayo's compelling biography to life through a hybrid form of storytelling that weaves together reconstruction, reenactment, and documentary.

*Flora* is a double-sided film installation, with each side revealing a different story while sharing the same soundtrack. The work is conceived as a conversation between Mayo and her son, David, whom the artists found living near Los Angeles after an exhaustive international search. *Flora* generates a multifaceted dialogue—between mother and son, Mayo and Giacometti, Paris and Los Angeles, and past and present. The exhibition also features *Bust*, inspired by a lost photograph showing Mayo and Giacometti flanking a portrait bust she made of him. *Bust* comprises a photographic reproduction and reconstruction of Mayo's no-longer-extant sculpture. *Bust* and *Flora* can now be seen in dialogue with LACMA's remarkable group of nine sculptures and one painting by Giacometti, which occupy a dedicated permanent collection gallery on Level 2 of the Ahmanson Building.

*Flora and Bust* premiered at the Swiss Pavilion of the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017. LACMA's presentation marks their American debut.

The exhibition is curated by Stephanie Barron, senior curator and department head of Modern Art at LACMA. She states, "Beyond its captivating narrative and visualization, *Flora* challenges those canonized in art history by recovering the history of this overlooked artist."

### **About the Artists**

Teresa Hubbard (Swiss, Irish, American, b. 1965 in Dublin, Ireland) and Alexander Birchler (Swiss, b. 1962 in Baden, Switzerland) have been working collaboratively in film, photography, and sculpture since 1990. They live and work in Austin, Texas and Berlin, Germany. In 2017 they represented Switzerland in the Swiss Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale in the exhibition curated by Philipp Kaiser, *Women of Venice*.

Hubbard / Birchler's work is held in numerous public collections including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden at the Smithsonian, Washington D.C.; Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland; Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas; Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Texas; National Museum of Art Osaka, Japan; and the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany. Their exhibition history includes venues such as the 48th and 57th Venice Biennale; the Tate Museum Liverpool; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Reina Sofia Museum Madrid; Kunsthaus Graz; Mori Museum Tokyo; Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. Their exhibitions are regularly reviewed in *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Frieze*, and *Parkett*; and their work has been prominently featured on the PBS *Art21*'s Peabody Award-winning series, "Art in the Twenty-First Century." Forthcoming 2019 solo exhibitions include the Giacometti Institute, Paris; the Goetz Collection, Munich; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver.

Hubbard grew up in Australia and later attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine, as well as the graduate sculpture program at Yale University School of Art, New Haven, Connecticut. Birchler grew up in Switzerland and studied at the Academy of Art and Design Basel and the University of Art and Design, Helsinki, Finland. They began collaborating as artists-in-residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada and later completed graduate degrees at the Nova Scotia

College of Art and Design in Halifax, Canada. Hubbard / Birchler are both faculty members in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin, where Birchler is an Associate Professor of Practice and Hubbard holds the William and Bettye Nowlin Endowed Professorship in Photography. In April 2017, they were each awarded an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts in recognition of their outstanding achievements to art and culture by the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University in Halifax, Canada.

### **Related Programming**

Hubbard / Birchler in conversation with Stephanie Barron and Philipp Kaiser, curator of the Swiss Pavilion of the 2017 Venice Biennale.  
Saturday, January 19, 2019

Hubbard / Birchler in conversation with Dr. Richard Shiff, Effie Marie Cain Regents Chair of Art at the University of Texas at Austin.  
Thursday, March 28, 2019

Visit [lacma.org](http://lacma.org) for the latest on exhibition-related programming.

**Credit:** This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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### **About LACMA**

Since its inception in 1965, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography, mirroring Los Angeles's rich cultural heritage and uniquely diverse population. Today LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of more than 139,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of art history from new and unexpected points of view. A museum of international stature as well as a vital cultural center for Southern California, LACMA shares its vast collection with the Greater Los Angeles County and beyond through exhibitions, public programs, and research facilities that attract over 1.2 million visitors annually, in addition to serving millions more through community partnerships, school outreach programs, and creative digital initiatives. LACMA's main campus is located halfway between the ocean and downtown, adjacent to the La Brea Tar Pits and Museum and the future home of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. Dedicated to serving all of Los Angeles, LACMA collaborates with a range of curators, educators, and artists on exhibitions and programs at various sites throughout the County.

**Location:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. [lacma.org](http://lacma.org)

**Images caption**

Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler, *Flora*, 2017, synchronized double-sided film installation with shared soundtrack, 30 min, loop, courtesy Tanya Bonakdar Gallery New York/Los Angeles, Lora Reynolds Gallery, Austin, Collection Suzanne Deal Booth, © Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler, photo: Ugo Carmeni

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