

**Exhibition:** *View from Here: Recent Acquisitions*

**On View:** April 1, 2021–Ongoing

**Location:** Resnick Pavilion



(Image captions on page 4)

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art presents *View from Here: Recent Acquisitions*, a selection of 16 works newly acquired by the museum and on view for the first time. The exhibition borrows its title from a series of photographs by Christina Fernandez. Shot in various locations in the southwestern United States—including the Manzanar, California internment camp, and the desert museum of artist Noah Purifoy—Fernandez’s interior views onto obscured landscapes register deeply in a time of “sheltering in place.” Themes of interiority and vastness, isolation and collectivity, stasis and movement recur across this group of artworks and find resonance in our current cultural moment.

Evocative portraits by Huguette Caland, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, and Calida Rawles draw equally on lived experience and imagination. Both Betye Saar and Lonnie Holley, who make assemblages from cast-off materials, use cages to convey the literal and metaphoric terrors of containment. EJ Hill’s *Lesson #3*, part of an eponymous series, dissects the chalkboard as a one-way transmitter of knowledge. Other artists in the exhibition depict water as a site of suspension or explore the conflict that lies within domestic objects or constructs of home. Representing a range of generational and global perspectives, these 16 artworks are critical additions to LACMA’s collection. Together, they underscore the importance of bringing multiplicity to bear on art history and art institutions.

*View from Here: Recent Acquisitions* is curated by Rita Gonzalez, Terri and Michael Smooke Curator and Head of Contemporary Art. The exhibition is the first in a series of presentations of recent acquisitions that will highlight the important emphasis LACMA has placed on addressing equity and inclusion in the museum’s collecting practices over the past decade.

### Exhibition Highlights

Felipe Baeza's experience as an undocumented, queer immigrant informs his depiction of "multidimensional, complex stories about who we are." *Untitled (so much darkness, so much brownness) (2016–18)* began with a hand-embroidered image of a family crossing the United States–Mexico border. The artist then applied light washes of paint, incorporated collage elements, and outlined state lines with twine. Once the image was fixed to the paper, Baeza layered "skins" of pigments, interference powder (containing mica), and water. The artist removed the paper when it was completely dry, and the residue stuck to the paper. He completed this practice around a dozen times for this work, emphasizing labor and process.

Interested in the physical and mental possibilities of the body, EJ Hill is known for his endurance performances, but is also an object maker and writer. Hill highlights his experience as a Black queer man and the tremendous resilience that is demanded of Black and Brown bodies by placing himself in spaces where he has never felt comfortable. Hill has used neon to put text into conversation with his body while he performs. During Hill's yearlong Radcliffe fellowship (2018–19), he began the series *Lessons*, in which each work includes a declarative chalkboard. As seen in *Lesson #3 (2020)*, Hill recasts the visual language bound up with the American education system to reckon with institutions that are not designed for all.

Lonnie Holley made his first artwork at 29, carving a sculpture out of industrial sandstone (a byproduct of nearby steel manufacturing plants) to place on the grave of his sister's two children, who had died in a house fire. Holley expanded his practice to include paintings and sculptural assemblage made of found objects he collected around his former home in Birmingham, Alabama. *African in a Cage Gasping for Air (c. 1990s)* features a dashiki and a gas mask within a cage fashioned out of chicken wire. Holley invokes a rich tradition of Black vernacular culture, reclaiming objects and transforming them into artworks that address slavery, environmental racism, and incarceration.

Hovering between photorealism and magical realism, Calida Rawles's recent series of paintings addresses the theme of water in African American history and expression, referencing Middle Passage, segregation, and economic disparities. *The Space in Which We Travel (2019)* depicts two adolescent girls in white dresses submerged underwater, grasping each other's hands, creating a double helix that suggests their genealogical linkage. Their bodies dissolve into ripples, swirls, and bubbles. Rawles sees water as turbulent and terrifying but also enveloping and elevating; in the artist's words, it is "duplicitous . . . a very dangerous element. In order to survive in water," she points out, "you have to relax. If you struggle, you sink. You take the waves as they come. I think of that as just a state of being."

Though John T. Riddle Jr. is known as an influential teacher, his equally important work as an artist has only recently garnered critical attention. Like his mentor Noah Purifoy, Riddle was deeply affected by the cataclysmic events of the Watts Rebellion. He began welding sculptural assemblages from the torched debris he found in the neighborhood then known as South Central, creating works with a social message that simultaneously evoke rage and possibility. Around 1970, Riddle, a former serviceman who felt the sting of institutional racism in the military, created ***America's Problem Solver***, an assemblage that evokes both a weapon and a telescope. Made during the time of the Vietnam War, the sculpture suggests that not only did the United States have other countries and cultures in its sights but also that the country itself was under scrutiny.

Gabriella Sanchez is an artist who creates large mixed-media paintings embedded with text, graphics, and photographs. Sanchez uses type and language to reference her dual Mexican American identity and Los Angeles upbringing. Her graphic design background is evident in the way she juxtaposes font types and iconography to create collage-like paintings, many of which embody a sense of place singular to Los Angeles. ***Down Is Up (2020)*** is part of a series of paintings that explores the threshold space between cultures—between the Mexican and the American, between “us” and “them,” and between the main and the margins.

Avery Singer uses three-dimensional modeling software to create the under-drawings for her canvases, then applies acrylic paint with an airbrush. Her immaculate gray-toned surfaces create an aesthetic confusion between the historical avant-garde and the present, and blur the line between mediums. In ***Sensory Deprivation Tank (empty) (2018)***, drips and smears are expertly rendered throughout the picture plane to imply the handprints and watermarks that appear on glass surfaces during and following a steamy shower. The artist humorously uses a banal setting to present her extensive knowledge of art history and to ultimately demonstrate that the fundamental questions that painters have tackled for centuries can continue to be elaborated through technological mediation.

Tavares Strachan's practice reflects on materiality and human relationships in natural and built environments. ***Passageways (Dislocated remnants from simultaneous events #4, Providence, RI) (2007)*** is an early sculpture that grew out of a series of site-specific works that Strachan completed while living in Providence, Rhode Island. After noticing broken windows in a neglected building in town, Strachan created a series of identically broken panes of glass that he inserted into the building's window frames. Passersby were unlikely to notice the identical shatter patterns, but if they did, they were left to question the history and condition of the site. Now divorced from this original environment, the objects' ambiguity and implied narrative speak to themes such as possibility versus impossibility and the seen and unseen.

## Related Programming

*View From Here* will be accompanied by a series of discussions between curators and guest speakers.

Visit [www.lacma.org](http://www.lacma.org) for the latest information on programming.

## Credit

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

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## About LACMA

Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of nearly 142,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. Committed to showcasing a multitude of art histories, LACMA exhibits and interprets works of art from new and unexpected points of view that are informed by the region's rich cultural heritage and diverse population. LACMA's spirit of experimentation is reflected in its work with artists, technologists, and thought leaders as well as in its regional, national, and global partnerships to share collections and programs, create pioneering initiatives, and engage new audiences.

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

**Image captions:** (Left) Christina Fernandez, *Toyo (Manzanar)* from the series *View from here*, 2016, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by Sharyn and Bruce Charnas, Dr. Janet Mohle-Boetani, and the Ralph M. Parsons Fund (M.2019.40.3), © Christina Fernandez, photo © Christina Fernandez; (Center) Calida Rawles, *The Space in Which We Travel*, 2019, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by Allison and Larry Berg and an anonymous donor, © Calida Rawles, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA; (Right) Gabriella Sanchez, *Down Is Up*, 2020, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased by AHAN: Studio Forum with additional funds provided by Jane Siegal, 2020 Art Here and Now purchase, © Gabriella Sanchez, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA

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