

MILLS COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

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AUGUST 8, 2022

[PRESS KIT](#)

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***Shifting Terrains* Explores Artists' Engagement with the Changing West Coast Landscape**

*Presenting works from MCAM's founding collection from 1925 to the present day, *Shifting Terrains* demonstrates how to ask 21st century questions of long held museum collections*



Jennifer Brandon, *Peak 1*, 2017, Archival pigment print on rag paper, 24in. x 32in. Museum Purchase, Mrs. John C. Sigourney [Mary Singleton], BA 1949 Fund, 2018.4

SHIFTING TERRAINS

SEPTEMBER 10 – DECEMBER 11, 2022

Opening Reception: Saturday, September 10, 2022 | 5:00PM-7:00PM

Oakland, CA (August 8, 2022) — Mills College Art Museum is thrilled to feature over 200 works from the collection in *Shifting Terrains*, our upcoming exhibition examining artists' responses to the West Coast landscape. Works in the exhibition explore the impact of climate change and the importance of environmental justice and preservation, as well as capture the stunning beauty and ecological diversity of the American West Coast.

The exhibition pulls from the Art Museum's deep holdings of California artists, including early twentieth-century California Impressionist paintings that celebrate the state's northern coastal scenery, and images by pioneering photographers whose work helped establish Yosemite Valley as part of the National Park Service.

These pieces underscore the conflicting interests of land conservation and commercial development throughout the history of California, often at the expense and displacement of Indigenous peoples and immigrant labor. Examples of Native American baskets as well as contemporary critiques of manifest destiny help demonstrate how cultural identity is often embedded in landscape and emphasize the politics of place.

The exhibition also explores humankind's impact on nature, including the increasing threat of natural disasters due to rapid climate change. In recent years this has taken the form of devastating wildfires, ongoing species extinction, and the continued threat of earthquakes along the California coast.

While some of the artists investigate these topics directly, others in the exhibition create abstracted and often poetic representations of nature that serve as metaphors for beauty, volatility, and rejuvenation. Above all, the works in *Shifting Terrains* help reveal our complicated relationship with the physical world that surrounds us, both in terms of natural splendor and evolving environmental realities.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Saturday, September 10, 2022

Opening Reception

5:00-7:00 PM | Art Museum

Celebrate the opening of *Shifting Terrains* and take in over 130 years of artists engaging with the West Coast landscape. Refreshments will be served. Masks required inside the gallery regardless of vaccination status.

Saturday, October 1 & Friday, October 14, 2022

All Is Not Lost

7:00-9:00 PM | Downtown Oakland (21st Street & Harrison)

Artist [Christy Chan](#) brings her video projection piece [All Is Not Lost](#) to Downtown Oakland. The artwork is a meditation on the uncertainty of the times we live in, and our very human but futile attempts to hold onto experiences and memories. Join us at the corner of 21st and Harrison streets from 7PM to 9PM to view a waterfall flowing backwards up to the top of the 28-story Kaiser Center.

Thursday, October 20, 2022

Judith Belzer and Kathryn Spence in Conversation

6:00-7:30 PM | Danforth Lecture Hall

A conversation between Bay Area artists [Judith Belzer](#) and Kathryn Spence, whose work is featured in MCAM's fall exhibition *Shifting Terrains*. Belzer's paintings explore human engagement with the natural world, often looking to manmade landscapes in order to consider this dynamic and sometimes uncomfortable relationship. Spence's objects and installations are inspired by nature but are composed from the discarded materials of the human world—exploring the disconnection between nature and human culture and, in particular, the realities of an overwhelmingly consumption-driven society

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Bessma Khalaf Artist Lecture

7:00-8:30 PM | Art Museum

An artist lecture from esteemed Iraq-born and Oakland-based artist [Bessma Khalaf](#) whose video work is featured in MCAM's fall exhibition *Shifting Terrains*. Khalaf employs processes of degradation (burning, smashing, shattering, melting, defacing, eating, regurgitating) to her work in photography, video, sculpture, and performance to explore the boundaries of landscape, place, and image.

ABOUT MILLS COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

Founded in 1925, Mills College Art Museum is a forum for exploring art and ideas and a laboratory for contemporary art practices. Through innovative exhibitions, programs, and collections, the museum engages and inspires the intellectual and creative life of the Mills community as well as the diverse audiences of the Bay Area and beyond. mcam.mills.edu

Museum hours: Tuesday-Sunday 11:00am-4:00pm, Wednesday 11:00am-7:30pm

Masks required inside gallery regardless of vaccination status.

Admission is FREE and open to the public.

ABOUT MILLS COLLEGE AT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Mills College and Northeastern University merged in 2022 to create [Mills College at Northeastern University](#) in Oakland, California—the first bicoastal university of its kind. The Mills and Northeastern merger fulfills a shared vision for a unique university that leverages Mills' legacy in equity, social justice, and leadership by women and nonbinary people, and Northeastern's tradition of diverse and inclusive global experiential learning and research.

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