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Hammer Museum Appoints New Artist Council Members Njideka Akunyili Crosby and Rafa Esparza



(Los Angeles, CA)— The Hammer Museum announced today the appointment of **Njideka Akunyili Crosby** and **Rafa Esparza** to its Artist Council.

Established in 2006, the Artist Council is a rotating advisory group of 10-15 internationally renowned, Los Angeles-based artists. The group meets regularly with Hammer curators and leadership to engage in extended conversations about specific programmatic issues at the Hammer as well as broad conceptual questions facing contemporary museums today.

“The Artist Council is a crucial guiding voice within the Hammer Museum, and I’m delighted to see Njideka and Rafa join their ranks. We rely on the Artist Council to challenge and enhance the Hammer’s standing as an intellectual and cultural laboratory of ideas. Njideka and Rafa are valuable additions to this esteemed group,” said Hammer Museum Director **Ann Philbin**.

Njideka Akunyili Crosby was born in Enugu, Nigeria in 1983 and currently lives and works in Los Angeles. She is the recipient of a 2017 MacArthur Fellowship and was awarded *Financial Times*' Women of the Year, 2016, alongside the Future Generation Art Prize 2017 Shortlist. She is the recipient of the Prix Canson Prize, 2016, Foreign Policy's Leading 100 Global Thinkers of 2015, the Next Generation Prize, New Museum of Contemporary Art, 2015, the Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize, 2015, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's James Dicke Contemporary Art Prize, 2014. Recent solo exhibitions include *Front Room: Njideka Akunyili Crosby*, The Baltimore Museum of Art [2018] alongside Prospect.4, curated by Trevor Schoonmaker, New Orleans, Louisiana [2018]; *Njideka Akunyili Crosby: Predecessors*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH, which toured to Tang Museum at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY (2017); *Portals*, Victoria Miro, London (2016), *I Refuse to be Invisible*, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach (2016) and *The Beautiful Ones*, Art + Practice, Los Angeles (2015), staged concurrently with a solo presentation at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2015).

Rafa Esparza was born in 1981 in Los Angeles. Esparza studied at East Los Angeles College before transferring to the University of California, Los Angeles, where he received his BFA. He currently works in installation, sculpture, drawing, painting, performance, and other mediums and has presented his work at a variety of sites, including traditional fine art contexts and community-based platforms as well as outdoor

Image credits: Njideka Akunyili Crosby, © John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; Rafa Esparza, photo: Fabian Guerrero.

public locations that he has independently sought out and organized. His work has been shown at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (2015); Bowtie Project, Los Angeles, with Clockshop (2015); Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, CA (2015); and Vincent Price Art Museum, East Los Angeles (2014). He has performed outside the Twin Towers Correctional Facility, Los Angeles (2015); in Elysian Park, Los Angeles (2014); and underneath the viaduct on Fourth and Lorena Streets, in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles (2014). His work was included in the MexiCali Biennial (2013) at the Vincent Price Art Museum and in Native Strategies 3 at Human Resources, Los Angeles (2013). He participated in the symposium “LA/LA Practice and Place” at the Getty Center, Los Angeles (2015). Esparza was awarded a Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant (2015), a California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Artists (2014), and an Art Matters Grant (2014). Esparza also participated in the Hammer Museum’s biennial exhibition Made in L.A. (2016) and the Whitney Museum of American Art’s biennial (2017).

Artist Council

Co-Chairs

Liz Glynn
Monica Majoli

Members

Kathryn Andrews
Juan Capistran
Fritz Haeg
Meg Cranston
Tala Madani
Njideka Akunyili Crosby
Rafa Esparza
taisha paggett
Andrea Fraser
Yuval Sharon
Charles Gaines
Kulapat Yantrasast

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum offers exhibitions and collections that span classic to contemporary art, as well as programs that spark meaningful encounters with art and ideas. Through a wide-ranging, international exhibition program and the biennial, Made in L.A., the Hammer highlights contemporary art since the 1960s, especially the work of emerging and under recognized artists. The exhibitions, permanent collections, and nearly 300 public programs annually—including film screenings, lectures, symposia, readings, music performances, and workshops for families—are all free to the public. The Hammer is a public arts institution of the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture. The Hammer is a public arts institution of the School of the Arts and Architecture at UCLA.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the Hammer Museum is free, made possible through the generosity of benefactors Erika J. Glazer and Brenda R. Potter. Hours: Tuesday–Friday 11 a.m.–8 p.m., Saturday & Sunday 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Closed Mondays and national holidays. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Boulevard at Westwood, Los Angeles. Onsite parking \$6 (maximum 3 hours) or \$6 flat rate after 6 p.m. Visit hammer.ucla.edu for details or call 310-443-7000.