



THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, August 30, 2022

MOCA PRESENTS JUDITH F. BACA: WORLD WALL

September 10, 2022–February 19, 2023

The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

ADMISSION IS FREE



LOS ANGELES—The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) presents *Judith F. Baca: World Wall*, the first complete presentation of the monumental, collaborative mural *World Wall: A Vision of the Future Without Fear* (1987-ongoing) by celebrated Chicana artist Judith F. Baca (b.1946, Los Angeles) in her hometown of Los Angeles.

“Judy Baca belongs to a generation of Chicana artists who were inspired by El Movimiento to give voice to the voiceless through public art, and for nearly fifty years, she has been our city’s foremost muralist. With the *World Wall* mural, she took a homegrown form—muralism, which was disparaged in many quarters—conceived of it as an arena for international dialogue, and sent it around the globe in order to envision nothing less than world peace. It is a tremendous honor for MOCA to join the legacy of Baca’s profoundly visionary and all-too-timely project by presenting all nine mural panels together for the first time,” said MOCA Curator Anna Katz.

Baca began the ambitious, utopian mural in 1987, instigating an international dialogue rooted in her philosophy that in order to achieve world peace, we must first be able to envision it. Baca created four ten-by-thirty-foot canvas panels in the United States before traveling the mural to three countries, where she partnered with local artists and students to contribute additional panels. Organized by Katz, all nine of the panels are presented in the WAREHOUSE space of The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA in an immersive installation.

“The *World Wall* was inspired by smart young people on the *Great Wall* production who said in the summer of 1983, in midst of an arms buildup, ‘We should take what we learned here in the Los Angeles River painting about interracial harmony around the world. We should take it from the neighborhood to the global to inspire peace.’ The work was conceived as a dialogue between artists envisioning a transformation of society because if we could not imagine peace,

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then how could we actually realize it?" said Baca. "I am happy that the *World Wall* has finally landed at MOCA here in LA where it began and will become an arena for dialogue again on important issues we currently face."

World Wall uses narrative visual vocabularies and mythological symbols to envision world peace. From 1987 to 1990, Baca painted the first four panels, "Triumph of the Heart," "Balance," "Triumph of the Hands," and "Nonviolent Resistance." In 1990, the project traveled to Finland, where the panel "Dialogue of Alternatives" was contributed by artists Sirkka-Liisa Lonka, Aaro Matinlauri, and Juha Sääski. Later that year, the panel "The End of the Twentieth Century" was contributed by Soviet artist Alexi Begov in the Soviet Union. "Inheritance and Compromise" was created by the Israeli and Palestinian artist team Ahmed Bweerat, Suliman Monsour, and Adi Yekutieli in 1998 in Monterey Bay, California. In Mexico in 1999 the panel "Tlazolteotl: Fuerza Creadora de lo No Tejido (Creative Force of the Unwoven)" was created by Mexican artists Martha Ramirez-Oropeza and Patricia Quijano Ferrer. The most recent panel, titled "The Inuit Send the World a Canary," was created in Canada by artist Tania Godoroja Pearse in 2014.

As director of Los Angeles' Citywide Mural Program in the early 1970s, Baca promoted over 400 mural projects and championed the practice of collaborative mural-making as a form of community-based activism for the historically disenfranchised. Baca co-founded The Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), a non-profit arts center in Venice, California in 1976; she continues to serve as its Artistic Director. Through SPARC, Baca initiated the *Great Wall of Los Angeles*, a half-mile-long intercultural timeline of the history of Los Angeles in the Tujunga Wash of the San Fernando Valley. Having focused for two decades on muralism with a local lens, Baca then developed *World Wall* to explore the potential of muralism as an arena for international dialogue during the final chapters of the Cold War and amidst decades of nuclear threat.

Baca is an emeritus Professor of the University of California, Los Angeles, where she was a senior professor in the Chicana/o Studies and World Art and Cultures Departments from 1996 until 2018, and in Studio Art at the University of California, Irvine, from 1980 to 1996. In 2012, the Los Angeles Unified School District named an elementary school the Judith F. Baca Arts Academy, located in Watts, her birthplace. She is a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship and the United States Artist Rockefeller Fellowship; SPARC is a recipient of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Grant, awarded for the expansion of her *Great Wall of Los Angeles* mural in North Hollywood. Her work has been exhibited at the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia; the Autry National Center; the J. Paul Getty Museum; the Museum of Latin American Art; MOCA; and more.

Baca constructed *World Wall* so that it may serve as a site for dialogue about the spiritual and material transformations necessary for the creation of peace, centering on the mural panels' themes of violence, inequality, and environmental catastrophe and its messages of social and ecological justice. At MOCA, that tradition will continue with an ongoing series of talks, workshops, classes, and performances which will take place with the exhibition, surrounded by the mural panels, as part of *Wonmi's WAREHOUSE Programs*.

Judith F. Baca: World Wall is organized by Anna Katz, Curator, with Anastasia Kahn, Curatorial Assistant, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Admission to *Judith F. Baca: World Wall* is free courtesy of Carolyn Clark Powers.

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Major support is provided by



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Public programming for *Judith F. Baca: World Wall* is made possible by Nora McNeely Hurley and Manitou Fund as part of MOCA's environmental series highlighting the museum's work around climate, conservation, and environmental justice.

Wonmi's WAREHOUSE Programs is founded by Wonmi & Kihong Kwon and Family.

This exhibition is carbon calculated. The museum reduced greenhouse gas emissions through planning efforts and balanced the remaining emissions through Strategic Climate Fund donations. Support provided by the MOCA Environmental Council.

Image caption: Judith F. Baca © 1990, *World Wall: A Vision of the Future Without Fear*, "Triumph of the Heart," 1987-90, by Judith F. Baca, one of nine panels from *World Wall: A Vision of the Future Without Fear* (1987-ongoing). Image courtesy of the SPARC Archives SPARCinLA.org.

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About MOCA: Founded in 1979, MOCA is the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth; a world-class permanent collection of more than 7,500 objects, international in scope and among the finest in the world; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

More Information: For 24-hour information on current exhibitions, education programs, and special events, call 213/626-6222 or access MOCA online at moca.org.

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