



**MEDIA ALERT**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs  
presents  
To View a Plastic Flower  
February 13 to April 19, 2020  
Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery**

*Exhibition Opening Reception: Sunday, February 9, 2020, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.*

Los Angeles - The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG), and the Barnsdall Art Park Foundation (BAPF) are pleased to present **To View a Plastic Flower**, a group exhibition that features new video and multimedia installations by three artists: Abigail Raphael Collins, T. Kim-Trang Tran, and Samira Yamin that engage themes of interdependence, positionality, and the poetics of conflict.

Central to the exhibition’s title and themes, **To View a Plastic Flower**, is Buddhist monk and antiwar activist Thích Nhất Hạnh’s idea of “inter-being,” meaning nothing can exist by itself, instead, everything has to “inter-be.” The figure of the flower stems from one of Thích’s well-known sayings, which suggests that by touching a flower one also touches the clouds and rain that were necessary to manifest the flower. However, the descriptor of plastic, which references both synthetic and natural materials, as well as the ability to be molded and changed, suggests that the nature of the flower has been altered.

A plastic flower, thus, may be viewed to “inter-be” with a multiplicity of possibilities and perspectives that considers past and present modes of production, and the consumption of mass media. Viewed through the lens of a plastic flower, the works in the exhibition provide a multi-dimensional interrogation of the construction, representation, and limitations of knowledge through media as a means to understand our socio- and geopolitical times.

*To View a Plastic Flower* presents three discrete installations that register the presence and absence of information, movement, and optics through each artist’s point of view set within the theater of military engagement. Abigail Raphael Collins’ experimental documentary and video installation, *Out of Play*, presented across four videos projected on repurposed set designs, investigates the relationship between the entertainment industry and U.S. military, and the fictions constructed in the absence of information.



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T. Kim-Trang Tran's three-channel video installation projected on hand embroidered screens, *Movements: Battles and Solidarity*, coalesces seemingly disparate events of early 1970s high fashion, labor unrest, and the Vietnam War by exploring their shared sociopolitical and physical "movements."

The sculptural work in Samira Yamin's *Passing Obliquely From One Medium Into Another* examines contemporary war photography by manipulating the viewership of mass media through carved optical glass. Yamin's obfuscation of images challenges viewers to employ new ways of seeing in order to reassemble the refracted and misaligned information. These installations also offer an opportunity to consider and exercise site – whether within the civic space of Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, the image magic created by Hollywood, or the greater, postmodern landscape of the United States – and the material aspects of viewing and being.

**Abigail Raphael Collins** received her MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a BFA from Cooper Union, New York. Collins' work has been exhibited and screened nationally and internationally, including Rotterdam and Seoul. Collins lectures on video art and visual semiotics at California Institute of the Arts. She currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

**T. Kim-Trang Tran** received her MFA from the California Institute of the Arts and a BFA from the University of Iowa. Tran's work has been exhibited and screened nationally and internationally, including at the Hammer Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art's Biennial in 2000. Tran is currently a Professor of Art at Scripps College in Claremont, CA and lives and works in Los Angeles.

**Samira Yamin** received her MFA from the University of California, Irvine, and a dual BA in Sociology and Studio Art from the University of California, Los Angeles. Yamin's work has been exhibited nationally including solo exhibitions at the Santa Monica Museum of Art (now Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles) and the Craft and Folk Art Museum (now Craft Contemporary), and her work was recently acquired by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Yamin currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

**About the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG)**

Established in 1954, the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery is the longest running institution in Los Angeles devoted solely to exhibiting art. The gallery focuses on artists from Los Angeles; in particular, underrepresented artists whose work may not otherwise have found a platform. LAMAG's exhibitions, educational, and public programs aim to inspire conversation about the contemporary issues and ideas that resonate most with the people of Los Angeles.



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Many local artists who have exhibited at the gallery have gone on to become fixtures of the international art world, including Eleanor Antin, John Baldessari, Mark Bradford, Vija Celmins, David Hammons, Barbara Kruger, Kerry James Marshall, Senga Nengudi, Catherine Opie, and Ed Ruscha. Today, the gallery continues to build on this rich legacy, operating as a site of discovery for outstanding work by the city’s most exciting artists, from recent graduates to practitioners with years of experience.

Offering free admission and programs, LAMAG serves as a welcoming space for everyone, regardless of their income level, personal history, ethnicity, sexual orientation, immigration status, religion, or gender identity.

**About the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs**

As a leading, progressive arts and cultural agency, DCA empowers Los Angeles’s vibrant communities by supporting and providing access to quality visual, literary, musical, performing, and educational arts programming; managing vital cultural centers; preserving historic sites; creating public art; and funding services provided by arts organizations and individual artists.

Formed in 1925, DCA promotes arts and culture as a way to ignite a powerful dialogue, engage LA’s residents and visitors, and ensure LA’s varied cultures are recognized, acknowledged, and experienced. DCA’s mission is to strengthen the quality of life in Los Angeles by stimulating and supporting arts and cultural activities, ensuring public access to the arts for residents and visitors alike.

DCA advances the social and economic impact of arts and culture through grant-making, public art, community arts, performing arts, and strategic marketing, development, design, and digital research. DCA creates and supports arts programming, maximizing relationships with other city agencies, artists, and arts and cultural nonprofit organizations to provide excellent service in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles.

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