

Exhibition: *Nature on Notice: Contemporary Art and Ecology*

Dates: December 21, 2024–August 2, 2025

Location: Charles White Elementary School Gallery



(Image captions on page 4)

(Los Angeles, CA—September 11, 2024) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Nature on Notice: Contemporary Art and Ecology* at the Charles White Elementary School Gallery. The exhibition spotlights more than 20 lens- and light-based artists, from around the globe, who probe the “new normal” in humanity’s relationship with the natural world. Unveiling 25 newly acquired works, *Nature on Notice* calls on both artistic and scientific imagination in countering threats to our ecology.

From its beginnings in the late 1800s, photography idealized the natural world—evoking the sublime and motivating protection of natural beauty. At the same time, the introduction of photographic land surveys facilitated unprecedented environmental exploitation in the form of infrastructure, extraction, and forced displacement. Now in the Anthropocene—the age in which human activity has been the dominant influence on the environment—artists are imaging an ecology that is changing even more rapidly. Through photography, video, neon, and installation art, the makers featured in *Nature on Notice* speak sensitively to the developments they are witnessing or, as a counterpoint to overconsumption, reflect Indigenous cultures that have long revered nature.

Nature on Notice is presented as part of PST ART: *Art & Science Collide*, a landmark regional event exploring the intersections of art and science, both past and present. The exhibition is curated by Eve Schillo, Associate Curator, Wallis Annenberg Photography Department, at LACMA.

"Artists in Southern California and beyond offer as strong a presentation about our current ecology and its challenges as does the scientific world," said Schillo. "In

conversation with PST ART's other environment- and climate justice-focused exhibitions, I'm excited for the opportunity to amplify diverse approaches to inspiring change that juxtapose data-driven discourse."

"Tapping into the strengths of LACMA's ever-growing photography collection, *Nature on Notice* demonstrates how our holdings can fuel meaningful dialogue around our changing relationship with the natural world," said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. "We are pleased to debut new additions to the collection at Charles White Elementary School as part of LACMA's longstanding commitment to sharing art and inspiration in communities across L.A. County."

Exhibition Highlights

Across three galleries and 33 works, *Nature on Notice* examines differing approaches to the photographic medium and the theme of ecological consciousness.

Lorena Cruz Santiago, *2:13 PM, 2022*

Lorena Cruz Santiago is a mixed media artist whose practice is informed by her family's Indigenous origins in Oaxaca, Mexico. Through her work she confronts issues of migration, assimilation, labor, and the agricultural industry affected by each of these elements. The cyanotype process deployed in *2:13 PM* allows for a direct interaction with the natural world, giving agency. Made during an artist residency in a Northern California vineyard, not far from her childhood home, this image was shaped by her father's years working in a nearby vineyard. The tenuous silhouette alludes to the capacity of field workers in a new age of climate change, who will provide this labor going forward, and how nature will continue to provide.

Cannupa Hanska Luger, *Future Ancestral Technologies++a generation of new myth*, 2021**

Cannupa Hanska Luger explores Indigenous futures presented through a lens of speculative fiction in his ongoing series *Future Ancestral Technologies (FAT)*. Luger probes how to share technology with his ancestors as we move into a time where the environment becomes an increasingly important, even desperate concern. The natural world is a critical element of this work, realized through the direct relationship he and his ancestors had with the land, the nomadic technologies Indigenous people developed, and the sacred places to which they formed connections. Luger's work encourages us to think about the earth, not as a possession to be dominated, but rather as something omnipresent with which humans must restore their bonds.

Klea McKenna, *Born in 1824, 2016*

Klea McKenna's practice is centered on camera-less imagery, or photograms. Raised by self-proclaimed renegade ethnobotanists, McKenna reflects on the effects of humankind on nature and nature's enduring patterns despite increasing incursions. Following leads from arborist scouts noting recently felled trees (legally and not), McKenna produced photographic rubbings of tree rings onto photosensitive paper.

Born in 1824 was created in the darkness of a forest, capturing the unknowable that is contained in the lifetime of a 192-year-old fir tree from Camp Meeker and all it has witnessed.

Cara Romero, *Water Memory*, 2015

Cara Romero is an Indigenous artist raised on the Chemehuevi Valley Indian reservation located near Lake Havasu, CA, and currently resides in Santa Fe, NM. She is a member of the Chemehuevi Valley Indian Tribe. In her theatrical, staged compositions, Romero recaptures the currency and modernity of her Indigenous culture and illuminates Native worldviews that allude to the supernatural in everyday life. In the title image for Romero's series *Water Memories*, figures in ceremonial corn dancer regalia are portrayed suspended in an underwater landscape. *Water Memories* are photography dreamscapes dealing with relationships to water, the forces of man, and of Mother Nature. They are individual explorations of space, memory, and diverse Indigenous narratives that are both terrifying and peaceful.

Yan Wang Preston, *Egongyan Park, Chongqing, China*, 2017

Yan Wang Preston depicts the controversial reforestation project occurring across China in her *Forest* series, a continuation of the artist's focus on the dynamic balance between humans and nature. Mature trees flourishing in this urban hardscape were harvested from small, rural towns left deserted by China's forced repopulation into new mega-sized cities. Recognizing the need to make these efficient, industrialized urban zones more liveable, the "cultural greenery" left behind would need to be reunited. Preston weighs in on the delicate relationship between natural and urban worlds in this tenuous "return to nature."

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



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Exhibitions and education programs at the Charles White Elementary School Gallery are made possible through the Anna H. Bing Children's Art Endowment Fund.

Nature on Notice is among more than 70 exhibitions and programs presented as part of PST ART. Returning in September 2024 with its latest edition, PST ART: *Art & Science Collide*, this landmark regional event explores the intersections of art and science, both past and present. PST ART is presented by Getty. For more information about PST ART: *Art & Science Collide*, please visit pst.art

About LACMA: Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of more than 150,000 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

Image captions: (Left) Cara Romero, *Water Memory*, 2015, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Dr. Loren G. Lipson, © Cara Romero, digital image © Museum Associates/LACMA; (center) Yan Wang Preston, *Egongyan Park, Chongqing, China*, 2017, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by the Ralph M. Parsons Fund, © Yan Wang Preston, digital image courtesy of the artist; (right) Lorena Cruz Santiago, *2:13 PM*, 2022, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by the Ralph M. Parsons Fund, © Lorena Cruz Santiago, digital file by Clare Gatto

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