

MEDIA CONTACTLindsay Wright | lindsaywright@cca.eduDonna Zeng | z.donna@cca.edu**CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts announces
2025 winter and spring exhibitions and programming**

Installation view of *STEADY*, April 17–December 8, 2024, Ballroom Marfa. Courtesy the artists and Ballroom Marfa. Photo by Heather Rasmussen.

San Francisco, CA—Thursday, December 19, 2024—The CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts is thrilled to announce its programming for the new year, featuring a rich lineup of exhibitions, artist talks, performances, and publications. During the winter and spring seasons, programming will delve into themes of materiality and formation.

“The 2025 programming feels especially meaningful as it marks the first full year that the Wattis Institute is in its new home on campus. The artists in this season explore and experiment with the ways in which personal and collective histories shape our understanding of the world. As we attempt to navigate our social and political moment, their set of ideas and inquiries can empower us in the year ahead.” — Daisy Nam, Zlot Family Director and Chief Curator of the Wattis Institute

STEADY: Michelle Lopez and Ester Partegàs

January 21–April 13, 2025

Opening Reception: Tuesday, January 21 | 5–7 pm

The new year begins with a powerful exhibition: *STEADY*, featuring artists Michelle Lopez and Ester Partegàs. Lopez, a Philadelphia-based sculptor, explores cultural phenomena through installations that critique dominant narratives and power structures. Partegàs, a multidisciplinary artist from Barcelona, creates thought-provoking works that examine consumer culture, urban environments, and the overlooked layers of everyday life.

Through precarious and playful yet powerful sculptures, both artists challenge conventional notions of balance, materiality, and shared space. Instead of emphasizing separation and assertion, the works embody a sense of counterbalance. The sculptures in *STEADY* examine how power takes shape physically and symbolically, inviting viewers to reconsider the structures that define our world and ask: *How is the world built, and why is it the way it is?*

As the Wattis welcomes visitors to its new galleries on CCA's campus, the works propose ways of inhabiting, holding, sharing, and gathering in space. *STEADY* includes a vibrant outdoor sculpture made of rope and fiberglass that stands nearly ten feet tall by Lopez, co-commissioned by the Wattis Institute and Tufts University Art Gallery. This exhibition is curated by Daisy Nam, Zlot Family Director and Chief Curator of the Wattis Institute, and organized by Diego Villalobos, Assistant Curator of the Wattis Institute. An iteration of this exhibition was presented at Ballroom Marfa.

Hiwa K is on our mind research season

February–May 2025

Each year, the Wattis Institute hosts a research program that explores the contemporary moment through the lens of one artist's work. From February through May 2025, a robust series of programs, lectures, and special events will be centered on the question that drives the institution's core mission: *What and how can we learn from artists today?*

This year, artist Hiwa K's work serves as a thematic lens to explore the intersection of art, history, storytelling, migration, and politics on a broader scale. Over the past two decades, he has developed a practice and body of work reflecting the geopolitical conditions of Kurdistan—a country spanning parts of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran—and the Kurdish diaspora. Emphasizing collaboration over individuality, his artworks manifest through informal peer-to-peer studies and performative actions. Drawing on anecdotes, gossip, jokes, family folklore, and stories, Hiwa K elevates the voices of those experiencing exile, displacement, and migration.

A list of programs in this series featuring Hiwa K is included below.

New publication: *Does the sun have a translucent shell?*

Co-published by CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts and Sternberg Press

Publish Date: March 2025

Does the sun have a translucent shell? is the fifth book in the annual [A Series of Open Questions](#) published by CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts and Sternberg Press. Each book takes the work of a single artist as its point of departure and expands outward to create a rich ecosystem of ideas and voices, featuring newly commissioned writings and a selection of perspectives, images, and references related to the Wattis' yearlong research seasons dedicated to single artists.

This fifth issue, edited by the Wattis Institute's Deputy Director & Head of Publications Jeanne Gerrity and Assistant Curator Diego Villalobos, is informed by themes found in the work of Anicka Yi, such as AI, umwelt, scent and taste, the anthropocene, decay and rot, the animal world, feminism, and Asian American experiences. Contributors include: Giorgio Agamben, John Berger, Nina Canell & Robin Watkins, Mel Chen, Julio Cortázar, Stephanie Dinkins, Dave Elfving, Ayesha Hameed, Taro Hattori, Cathy Park Hong, Tishan Hsu, Pierre Huyghe, Caroline A. Jones, Brian Karl, Heesoo Kwon & Karen Cheung, Jen Liu, Jochen Lempert, Yutaka Matsuzawa, Aspen Mays, K Allado-McDowell, Naomi Mitchison, Ho Tzu Nyen, Yasmine Ostendorf-Rodríguez, Adrián Villar Rojas, Jackie Wang, Keith Williams, and Anicka Yi.

Programs and Events

Opening of *STEADY: Michelle Lopez and Ester Partegàs*
Tuesday, January 21 | 5–7 pm

Exhibition Walkthrough with Daisy Nam and Ester Partegàs as part of FOG Art Week
Friday, January 24 | 10 am

Ester Partegàs and Stephen Lichy in conversation on sculpture
Saturday, February 11 | 11 am

Screening series with Hiwa K, in collaboration with KADIST
Wednesday, February 12 | 6 pm

Hiwa K on our mind series: Artist Talk with Hiwa K
Tuesday, February 13 | 6 pm

Michelle Lopez and Vincent Fecteau in conversation on sculpture
Tuesday, March 11 | 6 pm

Hiwa K on our mind series: Scholar and writer Rijin Sahakian and curator and writer Deena Chalabi in conversation
Thursday, March 13 | 6 pm

Publication launch: *Does the sun have a translucent shell?*
March 2025

Hiwa K on our mind series: Guillermo Galindo performance
Thursday, April 10 | 6 pm

About Michelle Lopez

Lopez is known for her conceptual practice and experimental approach to processes and material. Her installations and sculptural works are grounded in research on the iconography of cultural phenomena. Lopez received an MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York (1994), and a BA from Barnard College, Columbia University (1992). She is an Associate Professor of Fine Arts and head of the sculpture program at the University of Pennsylvania. Her solo exhibitions include the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2019), and Simon Preston Gallery, New York (2018). Group exhibitions span venues such as Protocinema, Philadelphia (2020); i8, Reykjavik (2018); and MoMA PS1, Queens (2000). Lopez has received awards including a Pew Center for Arts & Heritage Grant (2023), a Guggenheim Fellowship (2019), and a NYFA Sculpture Fellowship (2011).

About Ester Partegàs

Partegàs's work explores worth, loss, and renewal through sculpture, painting, text, and image, fostering a renewed relationship with the material world. Based in New York City, Marfa, and Barcelona, she holds an MFA from Universitat de Barcelona and a Postgraduate Diploma from Universität der Künste Berlin. Recent exhibitions include Nogueras Blanchard, Madrid (2022, solo); Fundació Joan Miró (2021); and The Drawing Center, NY (2019). Her work has been featured at MACBA, Sculpture Center, Museo Reina Sofía, and major biennials, including Moscow, Busan, and Athens. She has received awards such as the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2004) and the FCA COVID Relief Fund (2020) and held residencies at the Chinati Foundation and MacDowell. Partegàs currently teaches at Parsons and is represented by Nogueras Blanchard in Barcelona and Madrid.

About Hiwa K

Hiwa K's practice is deeply rooted in the exploration of collective and participatory dimensions, often focusing on teaching and learning systems while emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge through everyday experiences rather than formal doctrine. Hiwa K has participated in various group shows such as *Manifesta 7, Trient* (2008), *La Triennale, Intense Proximity*, Paris (2012), the *Edgware Road Project* at the Serpentine Gallery, London (2012), the Venice Biennale (2015) and *documenta14*, Kassel/Athens (2017). Recent solo shows include the New Museum, NYC (2018), S.M.A.K., Ghent (2018), Kunstverein Hannover (2018), Jameel Arts Center Dubai (2020), Museum Abteiberg (2021) and The Power Plant (Toronto (2022)). He has received several prizes such as in 2016 the Arnold Bode Prize and the Schering Stiftung Art Award and the latest being the Hector Prize in 2019.

About CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts

Founded in 1907, California College of the Arts (CCA) educates students to shape culture and society through art, architecture, design, and writing. Located in the vibrant San Francisco Bay Area, CCA uniquely prepares students for lifelong creative work by fostering social and environmental responsibility, innovation, and community engagement.

CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, founded in 1998 as part of the college, is a nonprofit exhibition venue and research institute focused on contemporary art and ideas. The Wattis commissions and showcases new work by emerging and established artists from around the world. Additionally, an entire year is dedicated to explore the work of a single artist, informing public programs and publications.

Recent solo exhibitions at the Wattis include *Rodrigo Hernández: with what eyes*, *Ana Jotta: Never the Less*; *Caitlin Cherry: The Regolith Was Boiling*; *Drum Listens to Heart*; *Hervé Guibert: This and More*; *Josh Faught: Look Across the Water Into the Darkness, Look for the Fog*. The 2024–2025 season is dedicated to artist Hiwa K; past seasons featured Anicka Yi, Lorraine O’Grady, Cecilia Vicuña, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Dodie Bellamy, and Joan Jonas. For more information, visit wattis.org.

The new Wattis gallery space is part of CCA’s expanded campus, adding 82,300 square feet of space to teach, make, and present art in a continuous indoor-outdoor environment. Designed by world-renowned architecture firm Studio Gang completed this fall 2024, the new addition brings together 30 academic programs and disciplines, student housing and dining, and interdisciplinary learning. For more information, visit cca.edu.

Location: 145 Hooper Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

Gallery hours: Wednesday–Saturday, noon–6 pm; closed Sunday to Tuesday

Admission: Free

Contact: 415-355-9670

Social: [Instagram](#) // [Twitter](#) // [Facebook](#) @WattisArts