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San Diego Art Institute Debuts Unprecedented Exhibit with *FORGING TERRITORIES* on June 29

Art exhibit showcasing LGBTQ communities of color to feature Patrisse Cullors of Black Lives Matter, the Whitney Biennial's Paul Mpagi Sepuya and Rafa Esparza among twenty legacy, established and emerging names

(San Diego, CA) June 1, 2019 – As part of an ongoing pursuit of social justice and in response to today's cultural climate, [San Diego Art Institute](#) (SDAI) will host new exhibit ***FORGING TERRITORIES: Queer Afro and Latinx Contemporary Art*** opening Saturday, June 29 and running through November 3, 2019. This thought-provoking installation will be among the first of its kind to explore and highlight conversations around underrepresented African American and Latinx artists identifying as LGBTQ and, given the SDAI's location within the cultural crown jewel of San Diego, ***FORGING TERRITORIES*** is positioned to leave a lasting mark on the millions who visit Balboa Park each year.

Purposefully launching only one day after the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, considered the seminal event leading to the modern LGBTQ movement, ***FORGING TERRITORIES*** will showcase rarely-told stories of personal and cultural awakening. ***FORGING TERRITORIES*** reflects artists' responses to a sense of identity and place, the influence of the current political moment and the comfort of shared background, language and history.

"We're a mainstream arts institution that serves as a launching pad for artists to reach the national and international stage, so it is essential that we open the gate to marginalized artists to allow thousands of residents and visitors to Balboa Park the opportunity to see this important talent," said Jacqueline Silverman, Executive Director of SDAI.

FORGING TERRITORIES is curated by Rubén Esparza, founder and director of the [Queer Biennial](#), an international art fair anchored in Los Angeles with satellites in New York, Mexico, Miami, Paris and Zurich. The exhibit will bring together twenty legacy, established, mid-career and emerging contemporary artists—all who live within the region—who work in such varied mediums as painting, drawing, photography, film and performance. Examples of the featured artists are:

- Photographer Laura Aguilar, included in the Venice Biennial and the permanent collection of the New Museum in New York City;
- Painter and printmaker Carlos Almaraz, the subject of a recent retrospective at LACMA and included in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum;
- Performance artist Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of Black Lives Matter;

- Photographer Texas Isaiah, shown at The Studio Museum in Harlem and The Hammer Museum in Los Angeles and hailed as one of *Time's* [12 African American Photographers You Should Follow Right Now](#) (alongside **FORGING TERRITORIES** artist Devin Morris)
- Photographer Paul Mpagi Sepuya, included in this year's Whitney Biennial; and
- Visual artist dana washington, a rising Southern California artist and 2020 MFA student at UCSD

"As a curator I feel it is important for institutions, museums and galleries to feature more artists of color and specifically queer people of color within the larger conversation," said Ruben Esparza. "Through **FORGING TERRITORIES** we will be able to tell a much fuller story of voices that are not as frequently heard within the world of art and culture."

FORGING TERRITORIES opens to the public on Saturday, June 29 with an opening reception from 7 to 9 p.m. and will then be open Tuesday through Sunday between 12 and 5 p.m. through November 3. Admission is \$5 per guest (\$3 for military, seniors and students; free for ages 12 and under); and free to everyone on the fourth Tuesday and Saturday of each month. Docents are available to conduct tours every Wednesday and Saturday between 1 and 3 p.m. Private visits and tours are available by appointment. Learn more at www.sandiego-art.org.

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About the San Diego Art Institute: First organized in 1941, the San Diego Art Institute (SDAI) has evolved into San Diego's premier contemporary art center focusing on regional art and artists. The non-profit organization actively supports established and rising talent, builds audiences for regional contemporary art and makes cultural equity and social justice a priority in all that it does. Located within an 8,000 square foot space in Balboa Park adjacent to the Mingei Museum, SDAI serves nearly 100,000 artists, youth and visitors annually. As the only contemporary arts institution its region, SDAI is a catalyst for advancing important regional art and artists and serves as platform for artistic visions and voices. Discover San Diego Art Institute at 1439 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101, online at www.sandiego-art.org and on Instagram at [@SanDiegoArtInstitute](https://www.instagram.com/SanDiegoArtInstitute).

About Ruben Esparza: Ruben Esparza, curator of **FORGING TERRITORIES**, is a California artist whose internationally recognized practice includes painting as well as analog and digital work. He is particularly influenced by queer culture and is the founder and director of the Queer Biennial, an international art fair anchored in Los Angeles with satellites in New York, Mexico, Miami, Paris and Zurich. Learn more at www.queerbiennial.com and connect at [@Ruben_Esparza](https://www.instagram.com/Ruben_Esparza).