

Oakland Museum of California



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OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA PRESENTS SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION BY OAKLAND ARTIST TORREYA CUMMINGS

Notes from Camp Asks the Question: What is Natural?

On View in the Gallery of California Art Starting July 1

(Oakland, CA) June 30, 2016—What is the nature of natural? Oakland artist Torrey Cummings poses this provocative question with a new multi-media, site-specific installation at the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) opening July 1 in the Gallery of California Art. Entitled *Notes from Camp (AKA Transdimensional Ghost Town Discotheque)*, the walk-through environment uses lights, video, reflective surfaces, and images from nature to create an alternate dimension, engaging visitors in an exploration of natural and artificial while blurring the subjective boundaries between the two.

In *Notes from Camp*, a cave-like environment abuts a structure that recalls a country shack. Within, Cummings creates a beguiling and sophisticated mash-up of images in which sparkle, shine, and glitz recall at the same time bioluminescence, salt crystals, discos, and drag, underscoring the extreme complexity and contrasts that define and defy personal identity.

“Nature gets used in arguments about human behavior—the argument goes that heterosexual bodies and behavior are somehow natural, and queer bodies and behavior are unnatural. And rather than appeal to nature, queer aesthetics delight in the artificial, the hyperbolic, the synthetic. ‘Natural’ is a construct, but it doesn’t know that,” says Cummings.

About The Artist

Torrey Cummings uses an eclectic range of methods to investigate notions of history and place, complicated by memory and fiction. The work takes a variety of forms: sculptures may function as props; installations become sets for real or imagined activities, performances may become videos or photographs.

Formally, she is interested in the double vision that happens when you can believe an illusion, but also see how it is constructed—and the inexact science of remakes, reenactments and reinterpretations. Conceptually, she works with the links between “irreconcilable differences”: urban and rural, gay and straight, natural and artificial. One focus of these experiments has been the idea of the “wild west” and the conflict between a cultural ideology of liberty and a practice of enclosure.

She has shown her work locally and internationally, in such venues as Southern Exposure and Silverman Gallery, (SF), Monty ABN in Antwerp, Belgium, and Galleria 1/9 Unosunove, Rome, Italy, along with other, more ad hoc guerilla exhibitions in San

Francisco. She was a nominee for the SF MOMA's 2010 and 2012 SECA award, and has a forthcoming installation commissioned by the Oakland Museum of California in 2016/2017. Cummings hails from California's rural Central Valley, and that experience feeds into the work. Cummings holds an MFA in 2009 from the California College of the Arts, a BA in ceramics and photography (with significant coursework in history) from UC Davis.

ABOUT THE OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) brings together collections of art, history, and natural science under one roof to tell the extraordinary stories of California and its people. OMCA's groundbreaking exhibits tell the many stories that comprise California with many voices, often drawing on first-person accounts by people who have shaped California's cultural heritage. Visitors are invited to actively participate in the Museum as they learn about the natural, artistic, and social forces that affect the state and investigate their own role in both its history and its future. With more than 1.9 million objects, OMCA is a leading cultural institution of the Bay Area and a resource for the research and understanding of California's dynamic cultural and environmental heritage.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) is at 1000 Oak Street, at 10th Street, in Oakland. Museum admission is \$15.95 general; \$10.95 seniors and students with valid ID, \$6.95 youth ages 9 to 17, and free for Members and children 8 and under. OMCA offers onsite underground parking and is conveniently located one block from the Lake Merritt BART station, on the corner of 10th Street and Oak Street. The accessibility ramp is located at the 1000 Oak Street main entrance to the Museum. museumca.org

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