



MEDIA CONTACT

Taryn Lott | tlott@cca.edu | +1 415-551-9359 (CCA) | +1 607-280-3694 (cell)

The Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts' winter/spring 2021 schedule features free, artist-centric events, lectures, screenings, and programming

Highlights include:

- The world premiere of three short films by artist **Cecilia Vicuña**
- A new online radio station created by 2020–2021 **Capp Street Artist-in-Residence Raven Chacon**
- The continuation of the ***Land to Light On*** series, featuring discussions about racial capitalism, abolition, and decolonization
- The release of ***Why are they so afraid of the lotus?***, the second volume of the Wattis's annual reader, *A Series of Open Questions*

San Francisco, CA—Monday, January 25, 2021—In the coming months, the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts presents a robust schedule of events centered on the question that drives the institution's core mission: *What and how can we learn from artists today?* Free virtual lectures and screenings, an artist-run online radio station, and a new book release highlight the voices of a diverse range of local, national, and international artists.

Each year, the Wattis hosts a year-long research season that explores the contemporary moment through the lens of one artist's work. The Chilean artist, poet, and filmmaker **Cecilia Vicuña** is the subject of the institute's seventh season. A series of discussions, performances, screenings, and other events began in September 2020 and continues through the summer of 2021. Informed and inspired by the ideas explored during the previous 2019–2020 research season, dedicated to filmmaker **Trinh T. Minh-ha**, this spring, the Wattis releases ***Why are they so afraid of the lotus?***, the second volume in its annual book series, *A Series of Open Questions*, co-published with Sternberg Press and distributed by the MIT Press.

The Wattis also welcomes Diné musician, composer, and installation artist **Raven Chacon** as the 2020–2021 Capp Street Artist-in-Residence, who will be in San Francisco from February to May. Also throughout the spring, the Wattis continues ***Land to Light On***, an ongoing lecture series about racial capitalism, abolition, and decolonization co-organized with various CCA departments.

[All upcoming events](#) are free and open to the public. Many of the Wattis Institute's lectures, screenings, and talks will be available to view in the [Wattis Library](#) shortly after each event.

The Wattis Institute's exhibition space is currently closed due to the COVID–19 pandemic and Bay Area health restrictions. Exhibition programming will return

info@cca.edu
800.447.1ART

1111 Eighth Street
San Francisco CA 94107

cca.edu

**California
College
of the Arts**



in September with ***Long Kwento***, featuring new paintings and sculptures by **Maia Cruz Palileo**.

***Cecilia Vicuña is on our mind*—Upcoming events in the Wattis’s 2020–2021 research season**

Begun in September 2020, the Wattis’s year-long research season, ***Cecilia Vicuña is on our mind***—informed and inspired by the work of the Chilean artist, poet, and filmmaker—continues its series of public events with a keynote lecture on [January 28](#) by **Miguel A. López**. López, the curator of Vicuña’s recent touring retrospective exhibition and a close friend of the artist’s, will introduce her practice in the form of a letter addressed to the artist. The lecture will be in Spanish with English subtitles.

On [February 11](#), **Cecilia Vicuña** herself joins the Wattis to premiere three short films created in Chile between 2018 and 2020 during the dramatic period leading up to the “Estallido Social,” the protest movement against the policies that ruled Chile since the military coup in 1973, as well as a film of her last live performance before the pandemic, conducted in February 2020 in Mexico City. The screening is followed by a conversation between the artist and Chilean American poet **Daniel Borzutzky**.

On [February 25](#), curator **Julieta González** gives a lecture on her landmark 2017 exhibition *Memories of Underdevelopment: Art and the Decolonial Turn in Latin America, 1960–1985*, at Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD) and part of the Getty Institute’s initiative Pacific Standard Time, which explored how Latin American artists from the 1960s to the 1980s responded to the unraveling of the utopian promise of modernization.

Future events in the spring and summer include a correspondence-based project between poets, organized by CCA professors **Tonya Foster**, **Frances Richard**, and **Denise Newman**; a performance by Bay Area artist **Indira Allegra**; a screening program of short videos related to the relationship between water, politics, and climate change; and a series of artist-made syllabi, among others.

The Wattis Institute learns from artists in a wide range of ways: In addition to commissioning new work by artists for the exhibition program, the Wattis organizes year-long research “seasons” in order to create a community around a broad set of themes and subjects as they relate to the work of a single artist. Through the lens of Vicuña’s work, which grapples with themes related to our present moment such as climate justice, Indigenous knowledge systems, ecofeminism, and precarity, among others, the Wattis will ask questions through research, events, and published writing, including: *What is the water saying? What is poetry for a revolution? What happens when Indigenous traditions are woven into Western ones? Does undoing complete the doing? What is radical reciprocity? What is about to happen?*

info@cca.edu
800.447.1ART

1111 Eighth Street
San Francisco CA 94107

cca.edu

**California
College
of the Arts**



Cecilia Vicuña is on our mind is co-curated by Jeanne Gerrity and Anthony Huberman and is supported by an Innovation Grant from the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation. [Read more](#) about the Wattis's 2020–2021 research season.

Raven Chacon—2020–2021 Capp Street Artist-in-Residence

The Wattis welcomes Diné composer, performer, and installation artist **Raven Chacon** as its 2020–2021 [Capp Street Artist-in-Residence](#). During his time in San Francisco, Chacon will launch an online radio station, programmed and conceived entirely by the artist. Running 24/7 from April 1 to June 30, the radio station will feature a mixture of live and pre-recorded performances by the artist and music and text-based recordings selected by the artist, as well as programs prepared by collaborators invited by the artist.

As the 2020–2021 Capp Street Artist-in-Residence, Chacon will also become a visiting faculty member in CCA's graduate Fine Arts program, teaching a graduate seminar this semester titled Scores for Sound and Narrative, which focuses on the creation of graphic, text, and Western-notated scores that relay extra-musical narrative or calls-to-action.

Raven Chacon (b. 1977, Fort Defiance, Navajo Nation, Arizona) is a composer, performer, and installation artist. As a solo artist, collaborator, or with Postcommodity, Chacon has exhibited or performed at Whitney Biennial, Documenta 14, REDCAT, Musée d'art Contemporain de Montréal, San Francisco Electronic Music Festival, Chaco Canyon, Ende Tymes Festival, 18th Biennale of Sydney, and The Kennedy Center. Every year, he teaches 20 students to write string quartets for the Native American Composer Apprenticeship Project (NACAP). He is the recipient of the United States Artists fellowship in Music, The Creative Capital award in Visual Arts, The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation artist fellowship, and the American Academy's Berlin Prize for Music Composition. He lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Founded in San Francisco in 1983 by Ann Hatch, **Capp Street Project** was the first visual arts residency in the United States dedicated solely to the creation and presentation of new art installations and gave more than 100 local, national, and international artists the opportunity to create new work through its residency and public exhibition programs. In 1998, Capp Street Project became part of the Wattis Institute, where it has evolved into a residency program. Every year, an artist spends three to four months in San Francisco meeting the local art community, working on new projects, and teaching at CCA. Without any fixed or predetermined outcome, each artist develops a relevant and appropriate way to share their work with an audience, which could involve producing an exhibition, presenting a performance, curating an exhibition, or publishing a piece of writing, among other forms. Recent Capp Street

info@cca.edu
800.447.1ART

1111 Eighth Street
San Francisco CA 94107

cca.edu

**California
College
of the Arts**



Artists-in-Residence have included Hồng-Ân Trương, Abbas Akhavan, contemporary, Melanie Gilligan, Carissa Rodriguez, and Nairy Baghramian.

Raven Chacon's residency is curated by Anthony Huberman and organized by Diego Villalobos, and is generously supported by the Wattis Foundation.

Land to Light On

On [March 24](#), **Dr. Charisse Burden-Stelly** joins the Wattis Institute for her lecture "**Between Radicalism and Repression: U.S. Black Communists Against Racial Capitalism.**" Dr. Burden-Stelly examines how the scholar-activism of Black anticapitalists like Claudia Jones, James Ford, William Patterson, Paul Robeson, Dorothy Hunton, and W.E.B. Du Bois offered a fundamental challenge to the entanglements of United States racism, capitalism, and imperialism throughout the 20th century.

The lecture, which is co-presented by CCA's graduate program in Visual + Critical Studies, is part of ***Land to Light On*** series—a collaborative public programming series between the Wattis Institute and CCA's academic departments focusing on racial capitalism, abolition, and decolonization, which launched in fall 2020. Past events included Howard University Africana Studies Associate Professor **Joshua Myers**, speaking on "**The Black Radical Tradition; or a Poetics of a Liberation,**" and "**The End of Eating Everything,**" the third installment from author and filmmaker **Ayesha Hameed's *Black Atlantis***.

Additional lectures in the *Land to Light On* series will be announced on the Wattis Institute's calendar.

Land to Light On is co-curated by Kim Nguyen and Diego Villalobos.

Why are they so afraid of the lotus?—the second volume of the Wattis Institute's annual reader series, *A Series of Open Questions*—to be released in spring 2021

Published in partnership with Sternberg Press and distributed by MIT Press, the Wattis Institute's annual reader, *A Series of Open Questions*, provides an edited selection of perspectives, images, and references related to the Wattis's year-long "[On our mind](#)" [research seasons](#). Based on questions raised by the work of filmmaker **Trinh T. Minh-ha**, the second volume of the series—***Why are they so afraid of the lotus?***—will be released this spring and will include new writing and art by **Ranu Mukherjee, Kathy Zarur, Shylah Hamilton, Astria Suparak, and tamara suarez porras**, as well as written and visual contributions by **Trinh T. Minh-ha, Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, Sky Hopinka, Christina Sharpe, Christine Wang, Camille Rankine, Dionne Brand, Renee Gladman, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, and**

info@cca.edu
800.447.1ART

1111 Eighth Street
San Francisco CA 94107

cca.edu

**California
College
of the Arts**



Steffani Jemison, among others. It is co-edited by **Jeanne Gerrity** and **Kim Nguyen**.

Each volume of *A Series of Open Questions* includes newly commissioned writing by members of the research season's core reading group, as well as text and visual contributions by a diverse range of other artists and writers. The title of each reader takes the form of a question and becomes, as new books are published, a gradually evolving series of open questions. The first book in the series—*Where are the tiny revolts?*, informed and inspired by the work of Bay Area poet and novelist Dodie Bellamy—was released in April 2020.

About CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts

Founded in 1998 at California College of the Arts in San Francisco and located a few blocks from its campus, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts is a nonprofit exhibition venue and research institute dedicated to contemporary art and ideas. As an exhibition space, it commissions and shows new work by emerging and established artists from around the world. Recent solo exhibitions include *Lydia Ourahmane: صرخة شمسية Solar Cry*; *Cinthia Marcelle: A morta*; *Vincent Fecteau*; *Abbas Akhavan: cast for a folly*; *Akosua Adoma Owusu: Welcome to the Jungle* (which traveled to the Contemporary Arts Center of New Orleans); *Diamond Stingily: Doing the Best I Can*; *Rosha Yaghmai: Miraclegrow*; *Adam Linder: Full Service* (which traveled to Mudam Luxembourg); *Ken Lum: What's Old is Old for a Dog*; *Henrik Olesen: The Walk*; *Melanie Gilligan: Partswholes*; *Howard Fried: Derelicts*; *Laura Owens: Ten Paintings*; *Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys: Tram 3* (which traveled to MoMA PS1); *Josephine Pryde: Lapses in Thinking by the Person I Am* (which traveled to ICA Philadelphia and earned Pryde a 2016 Turner Prize nomination); *K.r.m. Mooney: En, set*; *Sam Lewitt: More Heat Than Light* (which traveled to Kunsthalle Basel and the Swiss Institute, New York); and *Ellen Cantor: Cinderella Syndrome* (which traveled to Künstlerhaus Stuttgart). A recent group exhibition, *Mechanisms*, traveled to Secession in Vienna in an expanded form entitled *Other Mechanisms*.

As a research institute, the Wattis dedicates an entire year to reflect on the work of a single artist, which informs a regular series of public programs and publications involving the field's most prominent artists and thinkers. The 2020–2021 season is dedicated to the poet and filmmaker Cecilia Vicuña; past seasons featured Joan Jonas, Andrea Fraser, David Hammons, Seth Price, Dodie Bellamy, and Trinh T. Minh-ha.

The Wattis also hosts an annual Capp Street Artist-in-Residence, one of the earliest and longest-running artist-in-residence programs in the country, founded in 1983 by Ann Hatch as Capp Street Project, and incorporated into the Wattis Institute in 1998. Each year, an artist comes to live and work in San Francisco for a semester, teaches a graduate seminar at CCA, and presents an exhibition. Recent participants include Abbas Akhavan (2018–2019),

info@cca.edu
800.447.1ART

1111 Eighth Street
San Francisco CA 94107

cca.edu

**California
College
of the Arts**



contemporary (2017–2018), Melanie Gilligan (2016–2017), Carissa Rodriguez (2015–2016), Nairy Baghramian (2014–2015), Claire Fontaine (2013–2014), Ryan Gander (2012–2013), Harrell Fletcher and Kris Martin (2011–2012), Paulina Olowska and Renata Lucas (2010–2011), and Abraham Cruzvillegas (2009–2010). For more information, visit wattis.org.

About California College of the Arts

Founded in 1907, California College of the Arts (CCA) educates students to shape culture and society through the practice and critical study of art, architecture, design, and writing. Benefitting from its San Francisco Bay Area location, the college prepares students for lifelong creative work by cultivating innovation, community engagement, and social and environmental responsibility.

CCA offers a rich curriculum of 22 undergraduate and 11 graduate programs in art, design, architecture, and writing taught by a faculty of expert practitioners. Attracting promising students from across the nation and around the world, CCA is [one of the 10 most diverse colleges in the U.S.](#) This year, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked CCA as one of the [top 10 graduate schools for fine arts in the country](#).

Graduates are highly sought-after by companies such as Pixar/Disney, Apple, Intel, Facebook, Gensler, Google, IDEO, Autodesk, Mattel, and Nike, and many have launched their own successful businesses. Alumni and faculty are often recognized with the highest honors in their fields, including Academy Awards, AIGA Medals, Fulbright Scholarships, Guggenheim Fellowships, MacArthur Fellowships, National Medal of Arts, and the Rome Prize, among others.

CCA is creating a new, expanded college campus at its current site in San Francisco, spearheaded by the architectural firm Studio Gang. The new campus design will be a model of [sustainable construction and practice](#); will unite the college's programs in art, crafts, design, architecture, and writing in one location to create new adjacencies and interactions; and will provide [more student housing](#) than ever before. For more information, visit cca.edu.

info@cca.edu
800.447.1ART

1111 Eighth Street
San Francisco CA 94107

cca.edu

**California
College
of the Arts**