

USF Contemporary Art Museum
NEWS RELEASE
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***THE VISIBLE TURN:
CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS
CONFRONT POLITICAL INVISIBILITY***
January 11 – March 2, 2019

Curated by Christian Viveros-Fauné: organized by USF Contemporary Art Museum.

USF Contemporary Art Museum, part of the Institute for Research in Art in the College of The Arts, is pleased to present the work of four international artists who strive to make the invisible visible.



Bosco Sodi, *Muro*. Installation view in Washington Square Park, New York. September 2017. By Diego Flores and Chris Stach

In Plato's *The Republic*, the character Glaucon tells the tale of Gyge's Ring: the mythical band rendered the wearer invisible, enabling him or her to perform any act without fear of being known or discovered. Today, anyone with an Internet connection can become invisible. While the behavior of Russian hackers and Internet trolls supports Glaucon's assessment that the desire for invisibility is in part a longing for unaccountability, there is, historically speaking, another far more common way to become invisible. That disappearing act is the result of economic powerlessness, social disenfranchisement and political expediency.

The four artists in *The Visible Turn: Contemporary Artists Confront Political Invisibility* speak to the disenfranchisement of people and ideas that have crucially been omitted from today's social, political, economic and cultural life through four major works. These are Jorge Tacla's monumental twenty-six foot "portrait" of the Syrian city of Homs in ruins; Karolina Sobecka's exploration of the dark reality of climate change through the reconstruction of a trio of historical clouds; the raising of Bosco Sodi's *Muro*, a wall constructed of clay bricks made by Mexican migrants that is dismantled by museum visitors; and Tavares Strachan's installation, *130,000 Years*, which consists of an 18-channel video work and wall-mounted, collaged entries, each of which reference his *Encyclopedia of Invisibility*, a massive, 2000-page encyclopedia of invisible persons, places, groups, and things.

If the rise of identity politics in the 1970s and 80s championed certain marginalized identities and concepts in order to render them visible, various global forces today seek to actively reverse those advances—as evidenced by, among other phenomena, climate-change denial, the rise of anti-immigrant nationalism, increased political polarization, and the popularization of so-called "alternative facts." Besides giving voice to the conspicuously inconspicuous, the artists in *The Visible Turn* also materialize Marcel Duchamp's creative dictum—*artmaking is making the invisible visible*. By Duchamp's logic, invisibility is impotence. What is powerful is to be seen.

The Stanton Storer Embrace the Arts Foundation is the major supporter of *The Visible Turn: Contemporary Artists Confront Invisibility*. Bosco Sodi's *Muro* is sponsored by The Gobioff Foundation and USF World. The opening night artist conversation is made possible by the generous support of Dr. Allen Root in honor of his late wife Janet G. Root. Film screening sponsored by CAM Club.

RELATED EVENTS

All events are free and open to the public.

Visit <http://cam.usf.edu/events.html> for more information.

The Visible Turn Artist Conversation

January 11, 6-7pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

Artist Jorge Tacla will be in conversation with CAM Curator-at-large Christian Viveros-Fauné. The artist conversation is made possible by the generous support of Dr. Allen Root in honor of his late wife Janet G. Root.

The Visible Turn Opening Reception

January 11, 7-9pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

Join USFCAM to celebrate *The Visible Turn* exhibition with an evening of music and refreshments.

Art Thursday: Bosco Sodi, *Muro*

January 24

Public Interaction and Performance, 10am – 3pm

Dismantling of *Muro* by public participants 3 – 8pm

Reception 6–8pm; remarks at 6:30pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

As part of the USF Contemporary Art Museum exhibition *The Visible Turn*, USFCAM will present the public installation and performance of *Muro*, an approximately 6 foot high by 20 foot long wall constructed with 1080 unique clay bricks. Made by hand at Bosco Sodi's studio in Oaxaca, Mexico, with the help of local craftsmen, each brick is sealed by the artist with his signature. *Muro* is to be erected in front of USFCAM's entrance for one day, at the end of which visitors are invited to collectively disassemble the wall by removing one brick to take home with them. The project expands upon Sodi's ongoing interest in organic processes beyond the artist's control. The impermanent nature of *Muro* underscores the sentiment that all obstacles have the potential to be dismantled through collective effort. Each of the 1080 brick timbers distributed to participants will include a custom printed carrying bag, a tag and a certificate of authenticity. Bosco Sodi's *Muro* is sponsored by The Gobioff Foundation and USF World.

Press on *Muro*

- [New York Times](#) - The newspaper ran exclusive news story in print and online in July, announcing the project with quotes from the artist.
- [The Art Newspaper](#) - The paper's UK correspondent interviewed Sodi for a news piece where he said of the project, 'It's about breaking down walls physically and mentally.'
- [W Magazine](#) - On the day of the installation Bosco spoke to W Magazine's Stephanie Eckhardt 'Mexican Artist Bosco Sodi On the Wall He Built to be Torn Down By New Yorkers'

The Visible Turn: Curator's Tour

February 6, 6-8pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

USFCAM Curator-at-large Christian Viveros-Fauné will lead a gallery tour and discussion of *The Visible Turn*.

Art Thursday: *A memory, an ideal, a proposition*

February 14, 6-8pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

Artist-scientist Karolina Sobecka conducts a cloud-tasting demonstration and artist talk. Her work, *A memory, an ideal, a proposition*, included in *The Visible Turn*, documents an attempt to reassemble three clouds that changed the world.

SYCOM Concert: Music for *The Visible Turn*

February 22, 7-9pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

Students in the USF School of Music SYCOM composition and electronic music studio program present a concert of original music inspired by *The Visible Turn*.

Art Thursday: Film on the Lawn
February 28, 6-8pm
USF Contemporary Art Museum

Pack a picnic, bring a lawn chair or blanket for a free outdoor movie screening of *Cloudspotting*. This documentary brings to life Gavin Pretor-Pinney's "The Cloudspotters Guide", which draws on science, meteorology and mythology for a journey through the world of clouds. Presented by CAM Club.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS AND WORKS

KAROLINA SOBECKA - *A memory, an ideal, a proposition*



Karolina Sobeca, *A memory, an ideal, a proposition*, 2017.

Karolina Sobeca (b. 1977, Warsaw, Poland) is a New York-based artist and designer working at the intersection of art, science and technology. Her recent projects investigate the phenomena that drive technological innovation and shape the philosophy that inscribes humans within nature. Her work at USFCAM documents an attempt to reassemble three clouds that changed the world.

Clouds fundamentally acquire characteristics of the ground below them. Particles at the center of cloud droplets are traces of natural and human activity. A cloud is therefore more than a sum of gases, matter and meteorological forces. In the words of environmental historian David Gissen, each cloud "contains within it the tragedies and successes of the social transformation of nature that exist wherever human experience appears."

In Sobeca's installation, three clouds that have or will change the world are re-assembled. The material composition of the original clouds is reconstituted and conditions necessary for the cloud formation are applied.

The clouds created for this project are the following: 1) a cloud that was formed in the past ("a memory": in 1815, a giant supercloud resulting from the explosion of an Indonesian volcano located on Mount Tambora cooled the globe by 0.7–1.3 °F, created a worldwide agricultural disaster, and helped inspire Mary Shelley to write the novel *Frankenstein*); 2) a cloud that was formed in a lab ("an ideal": in 1946, this cloud was formed in a "cold box" at the General Electric Research Lab in Schenectady, New York, in the vain hope that natural resources could be fully controlled through technological means); and 3) a cloud that is scheduled for creation ("a proposition": in 2019 this cloud will be produced 8 miles above the ground in Tucson, Arizona, as part of a first ever field test in Solar Radiation Management; while the effects of geo-engineering to counteract global warming are difficult to predict, its potential future should be cause for explicit debate and concern).

These particular clouds have transformed how we think about climate, technology and the human command of nature. By examining their material composition and the conditions in which they were formed, *A memory, an ideal, a proposition* aims to rethink the reality of the geological and social transformations they helped or will help bring about.

BOSCO SODI - *Muro*



Bosco Sodi, *Muro*. Installation view in Washington Square Park, New York. September 2017. By Diego Flores and Chris Stach

Bosco Sodi (b. 1970, Mexico City) is a New York-based Mexican artist known for his richly textured, vividly colored large-scale paintings and sculptures. Sodi plumbs the emotive power within the essential crudeness of the materials that he uses to execute his artworks. By focusing on material exploration, the creative gesture, and the spiritual connection between the artist and his work, Sodi seeks to transcend the limitations of purely conceptual barriers.

Bosco Sodi's first public installation, *Muro*, is a 6 foot high by 20 foot long wall constructed with 1080 unique clay bricks that were made by hand with the help of local craftsmen in the artist's studio in Oaxaca, Mexico. *Muro* was first erected in New York's Washington Square Park on the morning of September

7, 2017, for a single day. At the end of that day, visitors were invited to take the wall apart collectively by removing single bricks to take home with them. It was subsequently built and taken apart following the same procedures on July 7, 2018, in front of the National Theater on London's South Bank. Muro will be constructed at USFCAM on the morning of January 24 and taken down the same day. Sodi's installation expands upon the artist's ongoing interest in organic processes beyond his own control. The impermanent nature of the installation also underscores the sentiment that all obstacles have the potential to be dismantled through the force of union.

TAVARES STRACHAN - 130,000 Years

Tavares Strachan (b. 1979, Nassau, Bahamas) is a New York and Nassau-based conceptual artist whose multi-media installations investigate science, technology, mythology, history, and exploration. His most recent work, *The Encyclopedia of Invisibility*, is a 2400-page encyclopedia featuring information on invisible persons, places, groups, and things the artist has amassed over a decade. It includes, among other figures, Rosalind Franklin, the historically overlooked scientist who laid the groundwork for Francis Crick to James Watson's discovery of DNA's double-helix structure, and Matthew Henson, the African-American explorer only sometimes acknowledged as the co-discoverer of the North Pole with Robert Edwin Peary in 1909.

Removed by distance from direct access to the masterpieces of Western art as a child, Strachan gained much of his knowledge of the outside world, including art, through several highly edited, now anachronistic printed encyclopedias—such as the World Book Encyclopedia and the Encyclopedia Britannica.

His recent installation at USFCAM, *130,000 Years* (2018) is centered around a newly produced 18-channel video installation titled *Taxonomies, entomologies, and evolutions* that dramatizes largely unseen changes in arctic environs, and highlights the invisibility and fragility of arctic wilderness and its species. Each vitrine features television monitors made from calcium carbonate, also known as classroom chalk, and chronicles found and studio filmed footage of disappearing arctic habitats. Along with these monitors are highly detailed vignettes that include a collection of neon objects, drawings, photographic artifacts, and invisible glass sculptures. The work also references Strachan's journey to the North Pole in 2013, reimagining Mathew Henson's 1909 expedition.

JORGE TACLA - Sign of Abandonment 34 (Homs)



Jorge Tacla, *Señal de abandono 34 / Sign of Abandonment 34 (Homs)*, 2018.

Jorge Tacla (b. 1958, Santiago, Chile) is a New York-based artist who creates ghost-like paintings that blur the formalistic boundaries between abstraction and representation to present a damaged view of the world.

His newest paintings continue the artist's decades-long exploration of the invisible structures and systems at work in society. Like other recent works, they feature heavily impastoed, expressionistic surfaces wrought in oil and cold wax, and limited palettes of grey, blue, and red. Also similar are the artist's subjects: buildings and real places, distilled from Tacla's memory as well as his vast archives of images from photo albums, books, magazines, and the Internet.

In the 1980s and '90s, Tacla moved from depictions of abject bodies and desert landscapes to a career devoted to painting sublime views of the world's worst nightmares. Among his subjects are the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City and various unending conflicts in the Middle East. Throughout, Tacla has always focused on the damage, never on the violence itself.

The ruined architecture featured in the six-panel, monumental painting Tacla has titled *Sign of Abandonment 34 (Homs)*, 2018, represents the destroyed Syrian city of Homs as assembled from a composite of images available from various print and web media.

ABOUT USF CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM

USF Contemporary Art Museum (USFCAM) organizes and presents significant and investigative exhibitions of contemporary art from Florida, the United States and around the world. Serving as a teaching laboratory, USFCAM's curatorial and socially

engaged initiatives and educational programs are designed to present the students, faculty, and community with current issues of contemporary art practice, and to explore the role of the arts in society. USFCAM publishes relevant catalogues, presents critically recognized traveling exhibitions and commissions new projects by national and international artists. USFCAM maintains the university's art collection, comprising more than 5000 contemporary art works.

MUSEUM HOURS + ADMISSIONS

USFCAM Hours: Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Thurs 10am-8pm, Sat 1-4pm

Closed Sundays and University Holidays (Closed January 21 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday)

Admission to the Museum is free; however, a USF parking permit (\$5.00 daily) or pay-per-space parking is required. Please visit our website cam.usf.edu for parking, directions, or more information on events associated with the exhibitions. Groups and organizations interested in tours should contact USFCAM to schedule at least two weeks in advance. Call (813) 974-4133 for additional information.

THE VISIBLE TURN MAJOR EXHIBITION SUPPORTER



EXHIBITION SUPPORTERS



Dr. Allen Root
in honor of his late wife
Janet G. Root



CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM | Institute for Research in Art

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The USF Contemporary Art Museum is recognized by the State of Florida as a major cultural institution and receives funding through the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The USF Contemporary Art Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

