



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The San Francisco Art Institute and Asian Art Museum
present
*Carlos Villa: Worlds in Collision***

First museum retrospective of iconic Filipino-American artist and educator Carlos Villa

**Many artworks not seen for decades
are a highlight of this expansive exhibition across two venues**

Aug. 13, 2021 - Jan. 3, 2022

San Francisco, CA, November 10, 2020 — *Carlos Villa: Worlds in Collision* is the first museum retrospective of iconic Filipino-American artist Carlos Villa and is presented as a joint exhibition at both the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) and the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

An alumnus and longtime SFAI faculty member, Villa (1936-2013) is a legend in artistic circles for his groundbreaking approaches and his influence on countless artists, but remains little known to many fans and scholars of modern and contemporary art.

Born in San Francisco, Villa was raised in the Tenderloin neighborhood and trained at SFAI where he also taught from 1969 to 2012. Inspired by the late 1960s Third World Liberation consciousness in the Bay Area, Villa radically changed his approach to artmaking to reflect non-western perspectives. The exhibition illuminates the social and cultural roots, as well as the global importance, of Villa's art and teaching career as he sought to forge a new kind of art-world inclusion that reflected his own experience, commitment to diversity, and boundary-bending imagination.

The full arc of Villa's career will be on display at SFAI as a featured highlight of the school's 150th anniversary celebrations. Early works, including a 1958 painting that was created at the school when Villa was an undergraduate there, point to his emergence from San Francisco's abstract expressionist and Beat era milieu. Several works on paper from the 1960s hint at the

dramatic change in direction that Villa's work would take. Exuberant works from the 1970s and 80s, like *Kite God Coat*, that incorporate feathers and paper pulp, as well as several full body prints, make plain the artist's intention to see a more diverse representation in contemporary art. Villa then began to specifically explore his Filipino-American identity – creating memorial constructions with black feathers to honor the *manong* laborer generation of his parents, many of whom resided in San Francisco's International Hotel. In later works, Villa pursued a more minimal direction that often incorporated poetic text. Several of his final constructions center on a personalized form of "scarification," using an awl on wood panels. As a teacher at SFAI, Villa promoted public engagement and volunteerism that he dubbed "Worlds in Collision," and ephemera related to his life as educator and activist will be highlighted.

The concurrent presentation at the Asian Art Museum features fourteen large-scale artworks, some not seen for decades, Villa created mostly in the 1970s that referenced non-western sources including African, Asian, and Oceanic art, history, and religion and which incorporated materials ranging from hair, spit, sperm, bones, to shells, feathers, mirrors, and silk. During this pivotal decade, Villa felt a new urgency to create work that explicitly reflected non-western sources and materials as an expression of his life-long mission to reflect a Filipino-American artistic perspective. Major works by three "next generation" artists or collectives who worked with Villa and advanced Villa's Filipino-American artistic agenda will be showcased in an adjacent gallery including Michael Arcega/Paolo Asuncion; the Mail Order Brides (comprised of Eliza Barrios, Reanne Estrada, Jenifer Wofford); and Paul Pfeiffer, several of whom are SFAI alumni.

"As a mentee and colleague of Carlos Villa, I saw and experienced firsthand how he was many things to many people—visionary, teacher, mentor, collaborator, organizer, and friend," says exhibition co-curator Trisha Lagaso Goldberg. "He went from undergraduate student to faculty member and community leader at SFAI and broke down cultural and racial barriers in the process through his distinct art practice. In the mid-1970s, he launched an intergenerational dialogue on multiculturalism in the arts that today is louder than ever. With Villa's more than 50 years at SFAI, there is no better way to mark the school's milestone birthday than with a retrospective of his influential career in partnership with the Bay Area's museum committed to Asian-American voices."

Carlos Villa: Worlds in Collision is co-organized by the San Francisco Art Institute and the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and is curated by Trisha Lagaso Goldberg (SFAI) and Mark D. Johnson (San Francisco State University) with special support from Abby Chen, head of contemporary art at the Asian Art Museum. The exhibition is accompanied by an original, fully illustrated catalogue published by the University of California Press with major essays by renowned scholars including Patrick Flores, Luis Francia, Theodore Gonzalves, Paul Karlstrom, Lucy Lippard and Margo Machida.

About the San Francisco Art Institute

Founded in 1871, SFAI is one of the country's oldest and most prestigious institutions of higher education committed to the practice and study of contemporary art. SFAI fosters creativity and original thinking in an open, experimental, and interdisciplinary context, and has played a central role in many contemporary art movements including Abstract Expressionism, Bay Area Figuration, Color Field, California Funk, and the Mission School. Celebrated artists and thinkers who have studied or taught at SFAI include Angela Davis, Bruce Conner, Carlos Villa, Ansel Adams, Mark Rothko, David Park, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Mildred Howard, George Kuchar, Richard Diebenkorn, Jay DeFeo, Catherine Opie, Joan Brown, Cristobal Martinez, Toba Khedoori, Mike Henderson, Barry McGee, Alicia McCarthy, and Kehinde Wiley. Other notable alumni include the photographer Annie Liebovitz and Academy Award-winning director Kathryn Bigelow.

SFAI's Galleries are open to the public Tuesday 11 AM – 7 PM and Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM and are free to the public. For general information, the public may visit sfai.edu or call (415) 749-4563. SFAI is located at 800 Chestnut St., San Francisco, CA.

About the Asian Art Museum

Located in the heart of San Francisco, the museum is home to one of the world's finest collections of Asian art, with more than 18,000 awe-inspiring artworks ranging from ancient jades and ceramics to contemporary video installations. Dynamic special exhibitions, cultural celebrations and public programs for all ages provide rich art experiences that unlock the past and spark questions about the future.

For hours, admission, and access information, the public can call 415.581.3500 or visit asianart.org. The Asian Art Museum is located at 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA.

SFAI MEDIA CONTACT

Nina Sazevich

Public Relations

415.752.2483

nina@sazevichpr.com

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