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**PRESS INQUIRIES**

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## **Elena Gross Joins Berkeley Art Center as Next Co-Director**

**May 27, Berkeley, CA** – Berkeley Art Center (BAC) is proud to announce Elena Gross as its next co-director, effective June 21, 2022. Alongside current co-director Kimberley Acebo Arteche, Gross will be responsible for setting and implementing the strategic vision of the organization as it continues to reimagine what a community art center can be. She comes to BAC after her time as the Director of Exhibitions and Curatorial Affairs at the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) in San Francisco.

“We are so thrilled to have Elena join Berkeley Art Center at such a pivotal time as we deepen our collaboration with artists and curators to create a dynamic, community-centered place for local contemporary art,” says Board President Kerri Hurtado. “We have seen during the pandemic how important our space has been as both a sanctuary and a hub for connection, and we are excited by the ideas and values that Elena will bring to our efforts to build community.”

Gross had previously been announced as the guest juror for this year’s annual members exhibition, scheduled to open on July 1. Her experience reviewing submissions from artist-members creates an intimate understanding of the opportunities BAC offers Bay Area artists to be part of a diverse intergenerational community. She onboards with the Berkeley Art Center with eight years of experience in the Bay Area arts and culture sector, including working at commercial galleries, independent nonprofits, museums, culturally specific institutions, and arts publications.

“Community art spaces are a vital, and yet a rapidly disappearing, cultural asset. Over the past several years, I have had the pleasure and opportunity to work with so many emerging and mid-career artists in the Bay Area, working in diverse disciplines and with varying practices and expertise.” says Gross. “I have seen firsthand the dynamism and rigor of the Bay Area arts ecosystem and have committed myself to keep these communities alive and thriving.”

BAC moved to a co-directorship model in 2021 as an intentional effort to create opportunities for emerging leaders after decades of operating under a sole executive director model. Says departing co-director Daniel Nevers, who started as executive director in 2018: “As we discussed adding a second full-time position, it quickly became clear that a joint leadership model made the most sense. In a small organization such as ours, all duties are shared and so we figured that

decision-making responsibility should be shared as well.” Nevers will step away from day-to-day operations in June and will join the organization’s Advisory Council to provide continuity and stability for Arteche and Gross.

“For equity to advance within historically white arts organizations, the demographics of decision-making leaders need to reflect the demographics of the communities they wish to serve,” says Arteche. “I am so excited to be part of an organization that has moved beyond words into meaningful action to support emerging leaders of color, and I cannot wait to work with Elena to bring our next phase to life.”

## **ABOUT BERKELEY ART CENTER**

Berkeley Art Center (BAC) is a hub for artistic exploration and community building that champions work by Bay Area artists and curators. Nestled in Live Oak Park in North Berkeley, the gallery makes contemporary art approachable and accessible — for free — at an intimate scale. Since its founding in 1967, BAC has exhibited work by important local figures such as Robert Bechtle, Enrique Chagoya, Taraneh Hemami, Mildred Howard, Hung Liu, Jim Melchert, Chiura Obata, Sonya Rapoport, Betye Saar, Katherine Sherwood, Peter Voulkos, and Carrie Mae Weems, among many others.

Berkeley Art Center is located in Live Oak Park at 1275 Walnut Street, Berkeley, CA 94709. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11 am to 5 pm. Admission is free. Website: [www.berkeleyartcenter.org](http://www.berkeleyartcenter.org)

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