



THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

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MOCA PRESENTS

PIPILOTTI RIST: BIG HEARTEDNESS, BE MY NEIGHBOR

**September 12, 2021–June 6, 2022
The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA**



LOS ANGELES—The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) presents *Pipilotti Rist: Big Heartedness, Be My Neighbor*, the first West Coast survey of the internationally renowned Swiss artist. The exhibition includes Rist's early single-channel videos dating to the mid-1980s, which established her critical appropriation of techniques drawn from popular culture and commercial advertising; her absorptive, architecturally-scaled installations brimming with blasts of color and lush textures, accompanied by hypnotic, lyric musical scores; as well as sculptures which merge everyday objects, video and digital images, and decorative forms. MOCA's first carbon-neutral exhibition and the first specially-ticketed exhibition since MOCA began offering free general admission, *Pipilotti Rist: Big Heartedness, Be My Neighbor* also will debut a new large-scale audio-video installation made specifically for The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA.

"We are thrilled to present the first survey of the work of the groundbreaking artist Pipilotti Rist on the West Coast, and it is an honor for MOCA to premiere her new ever-innovative work *Neighbors Without Fences*," said MOCA Director

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Klaus Biesenbach. "We cannot wait for visitors to be able to immerse themselves and experience Rist's installations of colors, sound, and light."

Rist expanded video into large-scale installations beginning in the mid-1990s. Equal parts technological and sensual, Rist's installations explore relationships of the body and technology; exterior environments and interior psychological landscapes; and reason and instinct. In Rist's audio-video installations, the external, visible world is of equal importance to dreams and that which we see when our eyes are closed. Her work fully realizes and joyfully explores the capaciousness of the video medium—its possibilities for vivid color; sweeping views and extreme close-ups; the expression of emotion and contradiction; introspection and cultural critique; and, importantly, the creation of shared, common experiences within the public space of the museum.

"Rather than treat video as a documentary medium, Pipilotti Rist harnesses it to roam the psyche, nature's wonders, and utopian fantasies. Neither cold nor objective, video in Rist's hands bathes us in chromatic and sonic warmth, in sensuous pleasure and joyous rebellion—and this is its art historical significance," said MOCA Curator Anna Katz. "Now, more than thirty years after Rist first exuberantly shattered the flat rectangle of the video screen, coaxing euphoric states out of machines and inviting a bodily engagement with both technology and the museum, in this time of social isolation, her work is a tonic."

Rist often likens museums to "public living rooms," and for this exhibition, The Geffen is imagined as a shared, open backyard, an in-between and semi-public space. The exhibition treats the central 35-foot-tall ceilinged gallery of the museum as an exterior environment, featuring Rist's *Pixel Forest* (2016), while individual galleries masquerade as civic structures, homes, and pavilions, decorated with foliage and framed windows to further elaborate the premise of a shared backyard. Within those galleries, surfaces of every sort are alive with moving images, manifesting Rist's aesthetic strategy of freeing video from the constraints of the box monitor and rectangular projection screen in order to disperse it across heterogeneous surfaces. The exhibition is designed to nurture our understanding of the museum as a public space, and key to this are transformations that soften and humanize the hard, geometric surfaces and lines of institutional architecture, through the use of curtains, cushioned seating, and vibrant projections that would seem to dissolve the walls.

The installations and sculptural objects in *Pipilotti Rist: Big Heartedness, Be My Neighbor* offer unconventional, immersive viewing experiences, and often aim to subvert if not eliminate the distance between technology and body. Museum visitors—whom Rist emphatically refers to as *guests*—are welcome to view the artist's early works while sitting atop improbably oversized living room furniture in *Das Zimmer* (1994); walk through ripples of color bursting through thousands of LED lights representing individual pixels in *Pixel Forest* (2016); enter a surreal domestic setting known as "The Apartment," wherein dining tables, beds, and desks double as projection screens; peek at the small-scale video *Selfless In The Bath of Lava* (1995) embedded in the floor; and lounge on cushions while bathing in the vivid hues of corner projections *Sip My Ocean* (1996) and *Ever Is Over All* (1997).

MOCA's affiliation with Rist began in 2000, when the museum purchased *I Couldn't Agree With You More* (1999) with funds provided by MOCA Life Trustee Audrey M. Irmas. This important acquisition in tandem with the upcoming exhibition attests to MOCA's long-standing support of Rist's groundbreaking experiments in video and the museum's commitment to presenting the most significant art of its time.

Special exhibition admission to *Pipilotti Rist: Big Heartedness, Be My Neighbor* is \$18 for adults; \$10 for students with I.D. and seniors (+65); and free for children under 12 and jurors with I.D. The ticket allows for a second re-entry during the exhibition. Special exhibitions are **free** every Thursday from 5pm to 8pm and MOCA members always receive free admission to special exhibitions. Tickets go on sale at moca.org on Tuesday, August 24, 2021.

Pipilotti Rist: Big Heartedness, Be My Neighbor is organized by Anna Katz, Curator, with Karlyn Olvido, Curatorial Assistant, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

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This is the museum's first net-zero exhibition. Special thanks to the MOCA Environmental Council.

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Image credit: Pipilotti Rist, *Open My Glade (Flatten)*, 2000, single-channel video installation (color, silent), 9:52 minutes. Courtesy of the artist, Hauser & Wirth, and Luhring Augustine.

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About MOCA: Founded in 1979, MOCA is the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth; a world-class permanent collection of more than 7,500 objects, international in scope and among the finest in the world; hallmark education programs that are widely-emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

More Information: For 24-hour information on current exhibitions, education programs, and special events, call 213/626-6222 or access MOCA online at moca.org.

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