



April 5, 2017

Dear Participants and Attendees,

We are writing today to provide you some information about events that have transpired over the past few days. On Tuesday a call went out from the community activist group B.H.A.A.A.D. for artists involved in the LA as LAB conference to withdraw. Additionally the group has called for a boycott line at the conference site. In response to these calls, the curator of the pecha kucha session, and the artists that had been scheduled to present their work in that session, are withdrawing from the conference. We wanted to alert you to the possibilities of these actions before your arrival at the conference.

The LA as LAB conference is being mischaracterized as a “How-To workshop for artwashing, speculative development and gentrification” (see email from Alianza Anti-ArtWashing <alianzacontraartwashing@gmail.com>, copied below). The listed panel on “Real Estate Development as Cultural Change Agent” is being singled out, based on a misunderstanding of the brand name Sotheby’s, as evidence that the conference has a position to promote with regard to public art, urban planning, the arts and gentrification.

The organizers of the conference want to be absolutely clear: LA as LAB is organized as a forum for open debate, dialogue, and discourse about common themes and issues that affect the contemporary art, museum and cultural worlds in Los Angeles. Our aim is to feature Los Angeles as a site where new and old issues are encountered in novel and traditional ways.

Open discourse and debate are foundational to the conference’s mission. We strongly believe that the purpose of a university conference is to forge open dialogue, widen perspectives and, frankly, to debate. In this spirit, we have agreed to a variety of requests for further participation to address what we believe is an incorrect perception of imbalance, including hosting a workshop and adding roundtable discussions to discuss anti-gentrification. The Pecha Kucha session was designed as an opportunity for artists to discuss their views of gentrification and its impact on arts communities and displaced populations. We were saddened that these offers have been met with calls for withdrawal of participation.

We remain hopeful that the spirit of open engagement that characterizes our conference and university will prevail. Every piece of the conference program is meant to facilitate questions and dialogue between presenters and audience. Conferences entail presentations and then time for discussion. It is a time-tested method of debate and dialogue. We seek to prove the value of that method again.

Some points of clarification so that decisions as to attendance and participation may be made with as accurate information as possible:

On March 29 Defend Boyle Heights posted to social media a statement (copied below) that claims Sotheby's Institute of Art is affiliated with Sotheby's International Realty. The April 4th email from Alianza Anti-ArtWashing claims that the real estate panel is moderated by Sotheby's. **Both of these statements are false.**

Here are the facts: Sotheby's Institute of Art is an independent, graduate-degree-granting educational institution with MA and other programs offered in London, where degrees are granted by the University of Manchester; in New York, where degrees are granted by the Regents of the State of New York and accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design; and in Los Angeles, where the degrees are granted by Claremont Graduate University and accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Though the Institute shares a brand name with Sotheby's Auction House and with Sotheby's International Realty, it is operationally, financially, and structurally independent of these organizations and maintains and upholds principles of academic independence and freedom.

Jonathan T. D. Neil, Director of Sotheby's Institute of Art - Los Angeles and a full-time employee of Claremont Graduate University with a faculty appointment in the University's Drucker-Ito School of Management, is moderating the panel on Real Estate Development as Cultural Change Agent. "Sotheby's" is not a moderator or participant in LA as LAB.

It is in the spirit of openness that we are sharing this information with you so that you may make your own decisions regarding your participation and attendance.

We are for more dialogue, more discourse, more debate, not less.

Sincerely,

Jonathan T. D. Neil, Director, Sotheby's Institute of Art - Los Angeles
Sarah Odenkirk, Associate Director, Sotheby's Institute of Art - Los Angeles
Joshua Goode, Chair, History Department, School of Arts and Humanities

From: Alianza Anti-ArtWashing <alianzacontraartwashing@gmail.com>

Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2017 at 4:17 PM

To: Ciara Ennis <Ciara_Ennis@pitzer.edu>, "okoumoundouros@gmail.com" <okoumoundouros@gmail.com>, "kenyattahinkle@alum.calarts.edu" <kenyattahinkle@alum.calarts.edu>, Sandra De La Loza <hijadelos@gmail.com>, Veronique <emailveronique@gmail.com>, "reception@caamuseum.org" <reception@caamuseum.org>
Subject: BHAAAD's response to LA as LAB Extra Territories

BHAAAD's response to "LA as LAB Extra Territories" 2017 Bradshaw Conference at Claremont Graduate University:

The LA as LAB Conference is built like a How-To workshop for artwashing, speculative development and gentrification. It is constructed around the idea that urban development and "urban growth" are desirable for our communities – when we know that these phrases are code for displacement. With a panel on "real estate development as cultural change agent" featuring urban planners, landscape architects and developers and moderated by Sotheby's, an organization whose sole purpose is to capitalize on art, the conference is an aggressive push into normalizing arts-oriented development as an instrument of urban planning. We noticed that four artists and a curator were asked to participate in an afternoon session and "present their responses to the impact of gentrification on their communities" in an attempt to co-opt these artists' practices as people who focus on anti-gentrification into this normalizing machine. This is a strategy on behalf of conference organizers to present "the other side" of urban development in order to "complicate" an issue that is actually quite simple: gentrification is displacement and replacement for profit. We called these artists to action and to step down off the panel. We are now drawing a boycott line at this event and ask all artists to join us April 8 at 9am Albrecht Auditorium in Stauffer Hall, N Dartmouth Ave, Claremont, CA 91711 and stand against artwashing and arts-oriented development.

LA IS NOT YOUR LAB!

In solidarity,
B.H.A.A.D (Boyle Heights Alliance Against Artwashing and Displacement)



Defend Boyle Heights

March 29 at 7:36pm · 🌐

High intensity gentrifiers talking about how to effectively gentrify and artwashing #LosAngeles: Self Help Graphics & Art, Metro Los Angeles, Sotheby's Institute of Art (affiliated with Sotheby's International Realty Affiliates), The Main Museum, yall can scope out the rest. Check out those panel discussions on real estate and Museums Changing too!

"Art and culture in Los Angeles are on the move, pushing past the conventional, beyond institutional frames, and out of... [See More](#)



Conference Schedule - School of Arts & Humanities

Conference Schedule 9:30 am – 10:30 am Opening
Keynote with Lita Albuquerque Albrecht Auditorium,
Stauffer Hall Lita Albuquerque is an internationally...

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