

Bellosguardo

September 26 – November 15, 2026

Bellosguardo Foundation

Santa Barbara, CA

Press Release

David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to present *Bellosguardo*, an exhibition of works by twenty-five artists engaging with the architecture and history of Santa Barbara's Bellosguardo Estate. The exhibition is on view at the Bellosguardo Foundation in Santa Barbara, California, from September 26 through November 15, 2026.

This exhibition features works by Mario Ayala, Jared Buckhiester, Lucy Bull, Aaron Curry, Sayre Gomez, Guan Xiao, Chase Hall, Evan Holloway, Shara Hughes, Rashid Johnson, Deana Lawson, Tala Madani, Simphiwe Mbunyuza, Ivan Morley, Ruby Neri, Maia Cruz Palileo, Hilary Pecis, Mai-Thu Perret, Adam Pendleton, Ricky Swallow, Tom of Finland, Tristan Unrau, Mary Weatherford, Jonas Wood, and Betty Woodman.

Bellosguardo, or “beautiful lookout,” is a sprawling oceanfront estate above East Beach in Santa Barbara. Dating to 1902, its history is closely tied to industrialism in the American West: the original residence was built by the Graham family, who made immense wealth in the oil fields of California and Oklahoma, then bought in 1923 by William Andrews Clark—a copper magnate and eventual Montana senator—as a retreat for his wife, Anna, and daughter, Huguette. Both Clark and later Huguette were prominent patrons of the arts; the former's collection reached over 9,000 works, most of which were posthumously donated to the Corcoran Collection at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.. After Clark's death in 1925, Anna Clark enlisted famed Southern California architect Reginald Johnson to build a new villa in the French style, shipping period rooms from Europe and reinstalling them onsite. Despite its dramatic redesign and initial vision as a paradisiacal family home, Bellosguardo went unoccupied for several decades, frozen in the Gilded Age.

Today, stewarded by the Bellosguardo Foundation, the estate has been reimagined as a venue for the arts and culture. David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to partner with the Foundation for its first contemporary intervention, a group exhibition bringing the gallery's singular program into dialogue with Bellosguardo's architecture, interiors, and fascinating history.

Jeremy Lindaman, President of the Bellosguardo Foundation, says, “Bellosguardo is thrilled to collaborate with David Kordansky Gallery in bringing the first contemporary art exhibition to the historic home since the property has transformed into a space open to the public. Such exhibits help fulfill the vision of Huguette Clark, the property's last owner, who bequeathed it to the Foundation with the dual goals of preserving the property for future generations and operating as a space to foster and promote the arts.”

Though its architecture and décor are European imports, Bellosguardo is inextricably tied to its California surroundings. The property straddles the sublime magnitudes of the state, between expanses of the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Ynez Mountains. Several exhibiting artists use painted gestures to evoke the slippery crosscurrents of the natural and built environments that make California too vast to characterize but indelible in the mind. In her abstract works, Mary Weatherford forges shifting fields of color and dimension as pools,

stains, and drips of paint move organically across the canvas. These physical dispersions create striking impressions of light that recall the atmospheric resonance of a Californian scene. Mario Ayala is deeply influenced by the state's human-made visual vernaculars, such as commercial signage and regional car culture. Along similar lines, Hilary Pecis and Sayre Gomez immerse viewers in their distinct visions of Los Angeles, as each artist's stylistic specificity captures how the massive city may be experienced or felt.

The property's immense beauty exists alongside the realities of the unchecked American expansionism that allowed for it to be realized. In this exhibition, engagements with complex geopolitical legacies find formal expression that is vibrant, lyrical, and even joyful. Though Chase Hall has long explored the fraught commodity histories of coffee and cotton—materials used throughout his practice—the artist's recent works focus on the formative moments in our own lives that make us who we are, possessing a snapshot quality that invites viewers to recollect their own memories and close relationships. The figures in Maia Cruz Palileo's *Echoes* (2026) are imaginative embodiments of the artist's telescopic research methods, connecting their family's origins in the Philippines and in the diaspora to the long shadow of colonial subjugation.

Elsewhere, artists negotiate personal interiority through depictions of spaces shaped by memory and perception. *Just Coasting* (2026) crystalizes Shara Hughes's expansive approach to the landscape genre, forging a world where observation and feeling exist in symbiosis. In their near-literary complexity, Jared Buckhiester's works may be approached as visual poems. The visual capaciousness of his imagery holds both what a person brings of themselves into a viewing experience and the landscape of history inscribed into any work of art. Other artists find subject matter in the wide-ranging aesthetics of the home or familiar surroundings, their quotidian subjects amplified in contrast to the domestic opulence of the exhibition's setting. Ricky Swallow is continually energized by the sculptural potential found in domestic objects, as Simphiwe Mbunyuza's ceramic sculptures are entwined with the South African traditions and people he knows as home.

Exaggerated or otherwise strange figuration provides compelling contrast to the mannered constraint of the exhibition space. Guan Xiao's anthropomorphic works reorient the value of conventional objects and artmaking methods as the futuristic sheen of aluminum motorcycle parts is transmuted into organic, at turns insectlike forms. Evan Holloway's head sculptures literally glow with a sense of open-ended playfulness, lightbulb noses blinking like modernist stoplights. Ruby Neri, Tom of Finland, and Tala Madani deploy the body as a site of subversion—whether expressed as irreverent feminine physicality, carnal desire, or sociopolitical critique via wry humiliation.

The estate itself is a capsule of pre-twentieth-century and modern art and design, spanning time periods, artistic milieus, and cultural contexts. Many artists in the exhibition make broad references to art history in order to expand its tenets: drawing upon traditional elements of vernacular photography, social documentary, and portraiture, Deana Lawson maps new proximities between artist and subject while foregrounding the agency of the Black figures who populate her images. Tristan Unrau recasts the Expressionist style of Chaim Soutine in an entirely new aesthetic project that challenges the very notion of artistic signature. *Untitled (Composition)* (2026) finds Adam Pendleton reintroducing the figure to his practice as the artist continues to evolve his critical-aesthetic framework of Black Dada, which charts the rhizomatic connections between Blackness, abstraction, and historical avant-gardes. Aaron Curry's freestanding sculptures recall the mobiles of Alexander Calder, melding industrial shapes and materials with bold primary colors. In a 2001 diptych by Betty Woodman, a fragmented

scene from Japanese antiquity unfolds across the three-dimensional ceramic planes. The composition echoes Huguette Clark's longstanding interest in Japanese culture, seen in the classical garments displayed in her studio as well as her own artistic oeuvre.

Many of the works on view probe the metaphysical or mystical contours of art, nature, and consciousness. A work on paper by Rashid Johnson demonstrates his interest in animism, or the belief that nonliving entities have a spiritual essence as humans and animals do: in *Soul Drawing "Messy"* (2026), evocative, overlapping linework suggests a porous boundary between physical form and soul. Mai-Thu Perret's sculptural lexicon is populated by highly symbolic figures who seem called down from a celestial realm, while Ivan Morley engages the West Coast painting tradition from its exploratory edges, leaving viewers unsure where the gloaming sky ends and the earth begins. Whereas these artists look outward, Lucy Bull finds endless depth within the canvas to evoke ephemeral or invisible phenomena. Before a vaporous Bull painting, the act of looking becomes a channeling, a tuning-in to visceral responsiveness rather than perceptive certainty.

Bellosguardo brings the strength and scope of the gallery's program into an unexpected, breathtaking setting. The exhibition may be considered a study of concentric containers: Bellosguardo holds both the strange constellations of American history and artwork; the works themselves hold diverse, enigmatic modes of knowledge and making.

From September 30 through November 15, tours of the exhibition are offered Wednesdays through Sundays. To learn more and book tours, please visit bellosguardo.org/events.