



**University Art Gallery**  
712 Arts Plaza  
Claire Trevor School of the Arts  
University of California, Irvine  
Irvine, CA 92697-2775  
(949) 824-9854  
gallery@uci.edu  
uag.arts.uci.edu  
Tues.–Sat., 12–6 p.m.

## **PRESS PREVIEW KIT**



*Photo Credit: Artur Żmijewski, film still, Compassion, 2022, Courtesy of the artist, Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich*

## **Leaves for Burning**

**Cog-nate Collective, Bassem Saad and Artur Żmijewski, Artists.**

**Curated by Juli Carson and Heather M. O'Brien**

**Contemporary Arts Center Gallery and Room Gallery**

**On View: October 1– December 10, 2022**

**Opening Reception: October 1, 2–5 p.m.**



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**IRVINE, Calif.** – The University of California, Irvine’s University Art Galleries (UAG) is pleased to host *Leaves for Burning*, a group exhibition of the work of Cog\*nate Collective, Bassem Saad, and Artur Żmijewski.

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*Leaves for Burning* takes its title from Peter Weiss’s play *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade* (1965), wherein the assassin Charlotte Corday decries the literal death drive beating at the heart of the French Revolution’s aim for national *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. By 1793, Paris was overrun with the spectacle of mass incarceration of political heretics, followed by their public execution. It was a dark libidinal machine from which no one was immune. As Corday inveighed:

*Look at this city  
Its prisons are crowded  
with our friends  
I was among them just now  
in my sleep  
They all stand huddled together there  
and hear through the windows  
the guards talking about executions  
Now they talk of people as gardeners talk of  
leaves for burning  
Their names are crossed off the top of a list  
and as the list grows shorter  
more names are added at the bottom  
I stood with them  
and we waited  
for our own names to be called<sup>1</sup>*

Over the years, Corday’s warning rings differently, depending upon which trauma has activated a rereading of Weiss’s play. Today a diverse, global majority—what Antonio Negri’s *Empire* referred to as the “multitude”—stands estranged from a group of minority figure heads who impose their civic, psychic, and physical violence upon their fellow citizens. While this may be the dominant political symptom in 2022, *Leaves for Burning* argues that an “aesthetic ethics” may well be the prognosis, a tactic whereby the artist/viewer stands with the estranged majority. Appropriating Corday’s words in this context: *As more names are added at the bottom of the list, we will stand with them. And wait for our own names to be called.* In so doing, we will write, we will talk, we will make art as subjects among subjects, as others among others. Simply, we will counteract the beat of this country’s death drive with the blazing light of a counter life drive. *Leaves for Burning* features three installations that inspire this life drive.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Weiss, *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the direction of the Marquis de Sade*, (Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc., 1965) pp. 87-88.



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### Artist Bios:

**Cog•nate Collective** (based between Tijuana, Mexico, Santa Ana, CA and Los Angeles, CA) was founded in 2010 and develops research projects, public interventions, and experimental pedagogical programs in collaboration with communities across the US/Mexico border region. Their work interrogates the evolution of the border as it is simultaneously erased by neoliberal economic policies and bolstered through increased militarization – tracing the fallout of this incongruence for migrant communities on either side of the border. As a result, their interdisciplinary projects address issues of citizenship, migration, informal economies, and popular culture. Therefore arguing for understanding the border not as a bifurcating line, but as a region that expands and contracts with the movement of people and objects.

<https://www.cognatecollective.com>

**Bassem Saad** (based between Berlin, Germany and Beirut, Lebanon) is an artist and writer. His work explores historical rupture, infrastructure, spontaneity, and difference, through film, performance, and sculpture, as well as through essays and fiction. With an emphasis on past and present forms of struggle, he attempts to place scenes of intersubjective exchange within their world-historical frames. Saad's solo and collaborative work has been presented and screened at MoMA, CPH:DOX, Transmediale, Architectural Association, Harvard University VES, and Alserkal Avenue. His writing appears in Jadaliyya, FailedArchitecture, and The Funambulist. He was a fellow at Eyebeam, Leslie Lohman Museum, and Ashkal Alwan's Home Workspace Program. He is currently a fellow at the Berlin Program for Artists and is a nominee for the 2022 Berlin Art Prize.

<http://www.bassemsaad.com>

**Artur Żmijewski** (based in Warsaw, Poland) is an artist, film director and photographer. His work examines the dynamics of power and oppression within the social order, and the relationship between extreme emotions and their physical expressions. Żmijewski is concerned with the disruption of the human body and of cognitive functioning in extreme cases such as illness or disability, while also examining mechanisms of memory and collective trauma. His research, constructed as interviews or documentary films, is at times provocative and often direct to the point of cruelty. He has been featured in the following: selected solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Basel; The Polish Pavilion, 51st Venice Biennale; MOMA, New York; Art Basel Parours; The Museum for History of Medicine, Riga, Latvia; Artwall, Prague; selected group exhibitions at the 29th Sao Paulo Biennial; Gwangju Biennial; Sharjah Biennial 10; 55th Venice Biennale; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Turner Contemporary, UK; Performa, New York; and more.

<https://www.peterkilchmann.com/artists/artur-zmijewski/biography>



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### **Curator Bios:**

**Juli Carson** is a professor of art, theory and criticism in the Department of Art at UC Irvine and Director of the University Art Galleries. From 2018-19 she was the Philippe Jabre Professor of Art History and Curating at the American University of Beirut. Her books include: *Exile of the Imaginary: Politics, Aesthetics, Love* (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2007) and *The Limits of Representation: Psychoanalysis and Critical Aesthetics* (Buenos Aires: Letra Viva Press, 2011). Her most recent book, *The Hermeneutic Impulse: Aesthetics of An Untethered Past*, was published by PoLyPen, a subsidiary of b\_books Press in 2019. Forthcoming is *Mary Kelly's Concentric Pedagogy: Selected Writings*, edited by Juli Carson, (UK: Bloomsbury Press, 2023).

**Heather M. O'Brien** is a filmmaker, writer, and Assistant Professor of Cinema in the College of Arts & Media at Southern Illinois University. Her work builds encounters with familial archives, constructs of nationhood, and the illusion of accurate memory. Research interests include expanded cinema, photographic histories, and the contemporary essay film. O'Brien received an MFA from CalArts and has been awarded residencies with the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Santa Fe Art Institute, Marble House Project, Women's Studio Workshop, Woodstock Byrdcliffe Guild, Sommerakademie Paul Klee, the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning New York, and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.  
Contact: [heathermobrien@gmail.com](mailto:heathermobrien@gmail.com)



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### *Leaves for Burning*

#### Fact Sheet

##### **Exhibition:**

On View: October 1 – December 10, 2022  
Cog-nate Collective, Bassem Saad and Artur Żmijewski, Artists.  
Curated by Juli Carson and Heather M. O'Brien

##### **Events:**

Public Opening Reception: October 1, 2–5 p.m.  
VIP Opening and Press Preview: Saturday, October 1, 12:00-2 p.m.  
Contemporary Arts Center Gallery Lobby

##### **Location:**

Contemporary Art Center (CAC) Gallery, Bldg. 721  
Room Gallery, Art Culture and Technology, Bldg 727

##### **Description:**

In *Leaves for Burning*, installations by Cog-nate Collective, Bassem Saad and Artur Żmijewski will counteract the beat of this country's death drive with three featured works that inspire this life drive. *Leaves for Burning* takes its title from Peter Weiss's play *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade* (1965)

##### **Gallery Hours:**

Tues. – Sat., 12–6 p.m. Free admission

##### **Parking:**

UC Irvine [Mesa Parking Structure](#), 4000 Mesa Rd., Irvine, CA 92617  
(Complimentary parking provided for the press preview with RSVP)

##### **More Info:**

<https://uag.arts.uci.edu/exhibit/leaves-burning>

##### **Note to editors:**

Selected high-resolution images for publicity only may be downloaded from  
[Google Drive](#)  
(Key to images attached)



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## PRESS PREVIEW KIT IMAGE KEY

Contemporary Arts Center Gallery, UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts

### *Leaves for Burning*

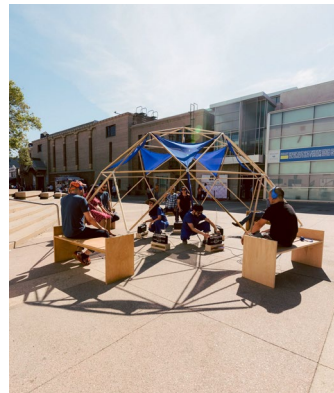
Cog·nate Collective, Bassem Saad and Artur Żmijewski, Artists.

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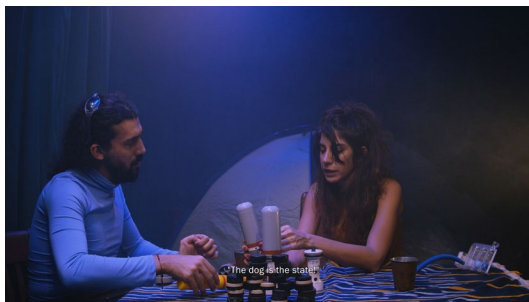
### Press Images:



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**Photo credits:**

- 1) Cog-nate Collective, *Future Echoes*, 2019, site-specific sound installation, poster image. Courtesy of the artists.
- 2) Cog-nate Collective, *Future Echoes*, 2019, site-specific sound installation, installation still. Courtesy of the artists.
- 3) Bassem Saad, *Congress of Idling Persons*, 2021, 36', film still. Courtesy of the artist.
- 4) Bassem Saad, *Kink Retrograde*, 2019, 19', film still. Courtesy of the artist.
- 5) Artur Żmijewski, *Repetition*, 2005, 39', film still. Courtesy of the artist, Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich.
- 6) Artur Żmijewski, *Compassion*, 2022, 10'10", film still. Courtesy of the artist, Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich.

The images are approved only for publication in conjunction with promotion of the exhibition. Reproductions must include the full caption information, and images may not be cropped or altered in any way or superimposed with any printing.



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### **About the UAG**

The University Art Galleries are committed to promoting an inter-generational dialogue between 60s/70s neo-avant-garde art and contemporary visual culture. Accordingly, the curatorial mission is to keep an eye on the modernist past while promoting the most innovative aesthetic and political debates of the post-modern present. From this vantage, the projects commissioned provoke intelligent debate on the subject of art in its most expansive poetic definition. What distinguishes the program is its unwavering commitment to publishing scholarly texts in catalogue/book form in order to disseminate research-based information into the community, providing a venue for the promotion of innovative discourse surrounding mixed media production today. The UAG program provides several exhibition platforms for inter-generational and interdisciplinary dialogue. The Major Works of Art Series commissions original projects by canonical artists working today. The Emerging Artist Series features solo projects by a set of younger artists informed by the legacies showcased in the Major Works series. The Critical Aesthetics Program commissions new work by internationally renowned mid-career artists. Augmenting this inter-generational dialogue, UAG also produces larger thematic group exhibitions alternately showcasing historical and contemporary art and film projects. UAG further promotes an active dialogue between UCI residents and the local and international art communities through colloquia, conferences, visiting artist lectures and theme-based films series, all of which are open to the public. As the galleries continue to mature, they stand committed to being an experimental exhibition space different from the current - but largely traditional - art biennial and film festival platforms.

### **About UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts**

As UCI's creative laboratory, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts explores and presents the arts as the essence of human experience and expression, through art forms ranging from the most traditional to the radically new. The international faculty works across a wide variety of disciplines, partnering with others across the campus. National-ranked programs in art, dance, drama, and music begin with training but end in original invention. Students come to UCI to learn to be citizen-artists, to sharpen their skills and talents, and to become the molders and leaders of world culture. For more information, please visit

[www.arts.uci.edu](http://www.arts.uci.edu).