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University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA) presents

Will Brown / MATRIX 259

June 12–September 13, 2015

SF–BASED ART COLLECTIVE WILL BROWN BASES A NEW EXHIBITION ON A HISTORIC SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION BY DAN FLAVIN AT BAM/PFA, AND THE CHANGING ART SCENE IN THE BAY AREA

Berkeley, CA, May 13, 2015 — The work of San Francisco–based art group Will Brown—a collaborative project of David Kasprzak, Jordan Stein, and Lindsey White—reimagines the roles of artist and curator through an inventive upending of traditional exhibition formats. In making its work, the collective often mines little known or forgotten artistic and cultural histories. Inspired by enigmatic stories about a site-specific installation by Dan Flavin at BAM/PFA from the late seventies, Will Brown’s MATRIX exhibition unfolds in a series of events and locations: an artist book displayed in UC Berkeley’s Morrison Library; a seemingly abandoned car positioned in front of the now closed Bancroft Way entrance to BAM/PFA; a light
installation on the building’s roof; and a theatrical production by Bay Area poet and playwright Kevin Killian, which will launch the project on June 12.

For MATRIX 259, Will Brown takes inspiration from BAM/PFA’s 1978 presentation of Dan Flavin: Drawings, Diagrams, Prints and Installations in Fluorescent Light. The exhibition, part of which was organized by the Fort Worth Museum, included a site-specific work made by the Minimalist artist for BAM/PFA’s main public stairway. Flavin’s untitled (for Gretchen, a colorful and fond match) consisted of twenty-eight green fluorescent light bulbs installed in the building’s lightwell, whose glow engulfed the stairway below and spilled out into the main lobby. The piece remained installed after the close of the exhibition and was finally removed sometime in the 1980s. Will Brown spoke to several past BAM/PFA employees and worked with current staff to reconstruct the elusive narratives surrounding Flavin’s work, particularly regarding the ethereal green glow that could also be seen on the building’s exterior as a column of light that radiated through the skylight.

Building upon the history of Flavin’s work and the mythic status it subsequently assumed, Will Brown uses the trope of the green light as a conceptual and formal link for each of the three components of MATRIX 259, as well as a metaphorical beacon for the memories that remain of it. The group re-creates effects of Flavin’s fluorescent work with a light and fog installation on the BAM/PFA roof. Additionally, an old car positioned in front of the now-closed main entrance—filled with copies from BAM/PFA’s archives—further serves as a metaphor for the institution in transition, as BAM/PFA prepares to move out of its current building to its new location in downtown Berkeley. “It’s a kind of a paper trail both personally and institutionally,” Will Brown explains.

A New Light on Riboflavin, a newly commissioned play by Killian, amplifies the sense of fiction and mystery now embedded in Flavin’s lost work. The exhibition also includes an artist book that functions as a “living archive” of the project and
emanates green light upon opening, which will remain on display in UC Berkeley’s Morrison Library throughout the duration of the exhibition.

Public Programs

*June 12, 2015 7 p.m.*
**A New Light on Riboflavin, a Theatrical Production by Kevin Killian**
BAM/PFA Sculpture Garden: 2621 Durant Ave
Admission is free

**Artist Book Display**
Morrison Library: 101 Doe Library, UC Berkeley
Free and open to the public

Morrison Library hours
*June 12 to August 19: Mon. – Fri., 12–5 p.m. (closed Friday, July 3)*
*August 20 to September 11: Mon. – Fri., 10 a.m.–5 p.m. (closed Monday, September 7)*
Check the library website as hours are subject to change: lib.berkeley.edu/hours

**Support**
**Will Brown / MATRIX 259** is organized by Apsara DiQuinzio, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art and Phyllis C. Wattis MATRIX Curator, with Lauren R. O’Connell, curatorial assistant. The MATRIX program is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Wattis and the support of the BAM/PFA Trustees.

**Artist Bio**
Will Brown is a collaborative project formed by David Kasprzak, Jordan Stein, and Lindsey White in January 2012. The group began when they took over the lease of a storefront located at 3041 24th Street, in San Francisco’s Mission District. During the nearly three years that the storefront space remained open the group presented dozens of innovative events and a wide range of exhibitions that explored and called into question the structures that underlie exhibition practices. Some of these included Illegitimate Business; Daren Wilson: After Morandi; Untitled (Black Painting); The Ghost of James Lee Byars; and Supreme Condominium Exhibition. Will Brown has also been invited to develop various off-site projects and exhibitions at the Headlands Center for the Arts, Marin County, California; the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco; the Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, Kansas; and di Rosa, Napa. In 2012, Will Brown received an Alternative Exposure Award from Southern Exposure. Since the closing of the 24th Street gallery in 2014, Will Brown has continued to develop projects collectively.

**About MATRIX**
The MATRIX Program for Contemporary Art introduces the Bay Area community to exceptional work being made internationally, nationally, and locally, creating a rich connection to the current dialogues on contemporary art and demonstrating that the art of this moment is vital, dynamic, and often challenging. Confronting traditional practices of display and encouraging new, open modes of analysis, MATRIX provides an experimental framework for an active interchange between the artist, the museum, and the viewer. Since the program's inception in 1978, MATRIX has featured artists such as John Baldessari, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Louise Bourgeois, Sophie Calle, Nan Goldin, Eva Hesse, Sol LeWitt, Shirin Neshat, Nancy Spero, and Andy Warhol, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Peter Doig, Omer Fast, Tobias Rehberger, Ernesto Neto, Rosalind Nashashibi, Tomás Saraceno, Mario Garcia Torres, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul, representing countries as diverse as Finland, Germany, Iran, Ivory Coast, Papua New Guinea, Mexico, Thailand, and Brazil.

**About BAM/PFA**
Internationally recognized for its art and film programming, the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA) is a platform for cultural experiences that transform individuals, engage communities, and advance the local, national, and global discourse on art, film, and ideas. Founded in 1963, BAM/PFA is UC Berkeley's primary visual arts venue with its screenings of some four hundred films and presentations of up to twenty exhibitions annually. BAM/PFA's mission is to inspire the imagination and ignite critical dialogue through art and film. The institution’s collection of over nineteen thousand works of art dates from 3000 BCE to the present day and includes important holdings of Neolithic Chinese ceramics, Ming and Qing Dynasty Chinese painting, Old Master works on paper, Italian Baroque painting, early American painting, Abstract Expressionist painting, contemporary photography, and Conceptual art. BAM/PFA’s collection also includes over 17,500 films and videos, including the largest collection of Japanese cinema outside of Japan, impressive holdings of Soviet cinema, West Coast avant-garde film, seminal video art, as well as hundreds of thousands of articles, reviews, posters, and other ephemera related to the history of film—many of which are digitally scanned and accessible online.

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