



TERESA HUBBARD /
ALEXANDER BIRCHLER

FLORA

ON VIEW SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 – APRIL 5, 2020



Bust, 2017, detail
 Framed silver gelatin print, 35 x 28 3/8 inches
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of the artists and Lora Reynolds Gallery, made possible by support from Suzanne Deal Booth; Michael Chesser; Candace and Michael Humphreys; Jeanne and Michael Klein; Laurence Miller; Shalini Ramanathan and Chris Tomlinson.

Cover image:
Flora, 2017
 Synchronized double-sided film installation with shared soundtrack. Duration: 30 minutes, loop.
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, promised gift of Suzanne Deal Booth.

Image on opposite page:
Bust, 2017, detail
 Brass sculpture with concrete base, 60 5/8 x 18 7/8 x 21 inches. Photo Credit: Ugo Carmeni
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Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler's *Flora* began with an invitation to participate in curator Philipp Kaiser's vision for the Swiss Pavilion at the 2017 Venice Biennale titled "Women of Venice." Kaiser wanted to reflect on the most celebrated Swiss artist, Alberto Giacometti, who famously refused to exhibit in this Pavillion during his lifetime, though the building was designed by his brother. Giacometti's notable absence led the artists to research both the sculptor's history, as well as the history of the pavilion, which revealed another absence—that of women artists. Through this process, Hubbard / Birchler discovered a sliver of information about a woman in Giacometti's circle, Flora Lewis Mayo. That she was originally from Denver, had lived in Paris in the 1920s, and was the subject of a well-known sculpture by Giacometti, *Tête de Femme (Flora Mayo)*, 1926, were some of the few details the artists first encountered. Years of research into Mayo's life, work, identification and mis-identification, and creative and personal voice, now come to the fore in *Flora* through Hubbard / Birchler's ambitious efforts.

Introducing the exhibition, *Bust (2017)* alludes to the artists' initial discovery of Mayo, featured in a photograph included in the definitive biography of Giacometti by James Lord. That photograph, reproduced here as well, shows her with Giacometti and a portrait bust that she made of him. Hubbard / Birchler's project radiates out from this starting point, for this is the work that launched their research into Mayo's history: Lord's dismissive and sexist description of Mayo had also piqued their curiosity about who she was, why she was treated so cursorily, and what history had elected to ignore. In a sense, the exhibition cumulatively draws Mayo from the margins of the historical record to its very center, tracing the path of her erasure in art history.

What unfolds across the galleries on the museum's second floor are fundamental questions about how history is constructed, reconstructed, and recalibrated. Hubbard / Birchler have spent years researching this artist's life, background, her practice, and her family, all of which bring her back to life and give her voice a platform that eluded her during her lifetime.

Memory blurs the contours between fact and feeling, often creating a haze of information that is both reliable and flawed. Research can provide a corrective, substantiating such experiences with reliable and verifiable information. The story of Flora Mayo as presented in this exhibition rests on a fulcrum between the two. The exhibition both connects the dots amongst the different periods of Flora Mayo's biographical and artistic lives, while also leaving many questions unresolved.



The Joseph Crescenti Gallery bears witness to Mayo's development, from her family's roots in Denver to her years as an art student in Paris. What Hubbard / Birchler create in this space is both a testament to a life richly lived, as well as the process that led them to their gripping film installation, on view in the Congdon Gallery. Both revelatory as well as theatrical, examples from the artists' archival research here highlight a key point: history is as much factual as it is fictive. Newspaper clippings, diary entries, and photographic evidence put forward real events and observations. But examples abound as to how inaccurate such evidence can be as well. For instance, a great irony of this project is that the photograph in *Bust* had previously misidentified the female figure as Margaret Cossaceanu. Through the efforts of Hubbard / Birchler, a corrected identification now recognizes this woman as Flora Mayo. This slippage suggests how malleable and fragile and how constructed and fraught, the recording of history actually is and how quickly it can dissolve into error.

The unearthing of Flora Mayo's biography, as achieved by this exhibition, is both about the individual who was sacrificed by her family (into an arranged marriage, in which she had little creative opportunity) and also who sacrificed for them. *Flora* wrestles forcefully with the gender dynamics that steered Mayo's life. Hubbard / Birchler pull this out by returning what had been denied to Flora in her lifetime — they reintroduce her voice to the conversation, which is one that is shared with Giacometti and also with her son. Her own words, as recorded in letters and journal entries, share the soundtrack with David's recollections of his mother, finally endowing her with the agency to describe her desires and intentions. Hubbard / Birchler's combination of storytelling devices, blending reenactment and documentation, creates a riveting presentation that draws the past into the present and the periphery to the center. In doing so, they reframe the legacy of this artist as one of courage and ambition.

Nora Burnett Abrams
Mark G. Falcone Director

CHECKLIST OF WORKS:

Bust, Flora Mayo and Alberto Giacometti, with the bust she made of him, circa 1927. Photographer unknown. Original photograph belonging to Flora Mayo, kept under her mattress, lost. Film negative missing. Reproduction from only known duplicate print, archive of Fotostiftung Schweiz, Winterthur. Original clay bust portrait of Alberto Giacometti by Flora Mayo, lost. Reconstructed and cast in brass, 2017

Framed silver gelatin print, 35 x 28 3/8 inches

Brass sculpture with concrete base, 60 5/8 x 18 7/8 x 21 inches

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Archive, Flora Luella Lewis Mayo, 2018 — ongoing

Museum of Contemporary Art Denver iteration with loans from David Mayo and the History Colorado Collection.

Flora, 2017

Synchronized double-sided film installation with shared soundtrack. Duration: 30 minutes, loop. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, promised gift of Suzanne Deal Booth.

CREDITS



Production Credits *Flora*

Written and directed	Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler
Cast	
David Mayo	as himself
Flora Mayo	Julia Zange
Alberto Giacometti	Jules Armana
Flora Voiceover	JeJu Caron
Flora's Cat	Melville
Executive Producers	Walter A. Bechtler Foundation, Zurich Suzanne Deal Booth, Los Angeles Sammlung Goetz, Munich Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler Aargauer Kuratorium, Aarau Burger Collection, Hong Kong, Zurich Pro Helvetia, Swiss Arts Council, Zurich College of Fine Arts, University of Texas at Austin Luis Singer, Dennis Schanz, Ole Lohmann, Thomas Loos
With Additional Support	StickUp Filmproduktion, Berlin Leah Lani-Griffin
Producers	
Production Company	
Creative Producer	

<i>Berlin Unit</i>	
Director of Photography	Gaetan Varone
Camera Assistant	Nicolai Wolf
2nd Camera Assistant	Marie Klein
Gaffer	Vitali Kunath
Electricians	Selina Becker, Matthias Franz, Markus Koob
Grip	Faraz Fesharaki
Sound Engineer	Johanes Kaschek
Production Design	Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler
Scenography	Ina Timmerberg
Scenography Assistant	Solveigh Sprengel
Scenography Driver, Assistant	Sebastian Becker
Sculpture Prop Master / Consultant	Sebastian Paul
Prop Casting Facility	Kunstgiesserei St. Gallen AG
Costume Design	Svenja Gassen
Costume Design Assistant	Maja Aurora Svartaker
Hair / Make-Up	Seher Yavas
Still Photographer	Austin Hayley
Runner / Driver	Ewelina Rosinska
Special Effect	Daniel Schnell
Catering	Maximilian Vettters
Film Set Location	WBB Brauerei, Pankow, Berlin

<i>Los Angeles Unit</i>	
Producer / Fixer	Leah Lani-Griffin
Director of Photography	Wilson Waggoner
Camera Assistant	Andy Huynh
Sound Engineer	Michael Rich
Lighting Equipment	Wooden Nickel
Location	Versailles Apartment, Los Angeles, CA Rancho Cucamonga, CA

<i>Zurich Unit</i>	
Director of Photography	Gaetan Varone
Camera Assistant	Philipp Koller
Sound Engineer	Jean-Pierre Gerth
Location	Kunsthaus Zurich

<i>Paris Unit</i>	
Producer / Fixer	Sylvaine Faligant
Director of Photography	Nicolai Wolf
Camera Assistant	Florian Geyer
Sound Recordist	Teresa Hubbard
Location	Fondation Giacometti, Paris
Translator	Alice Cazzola
Post Production	
Editor and Colorist	Alexander Birchler
Co-Editor	Leah Lani-Griffin, Mitchell O'Hearn, Teresa Hubbard
Media Management	Skye Ashbrook
Audio Visual Consulting	Hanspeter Giuliani, Tweaklab, Basel
Sound Design	Eric Friend
Composer	Alex Weston
French Consultant	Jack Langlois
Installation	Tweaklab, Basel

Production Acknowledgements *Bust*

Sculptors: Rita Kappenthuler, Carine Kirsch, Marc Krcek, Sebastian Paul
Production facility: Kunstgiesserei, St. Gallen AG, Switzerland

Research Assistance Acknowledgements

Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian, Washington D.C.; Christian Alandete, Artistic Director of the Giacometti Institute, Fondation Giacometti, Paris; Lucienne Allen, Founder, Archive of Lucienne Bloch, Gualala, CA; Felicia Bartley, University of Colorado; Michael Brenson, Art Historian, Critic, New York; Philippe Büttner, Collection Curator, Kunsthaus Zurich; Lisa M. Carpenter, Archivist, Norlin Library, University of Colorado at Boulder, CO; Bebe S. Chang, Archivist, University Libraries, University of Colorado at Boulder, CO; Civitella Ranieri Foundation; Letizia Enderli, Fotostiftung Schweiz; Mirjam Fischer, Curatorial Assistant, Swiss Pavilion; Pamela Franks, Acting, Director, Yale University, Art Gallery, New Haven; Todd Gustavson, Curator, Technology, Collection, George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York; David Hunter, Music Librarian and Curator, Fine Arts Library, University of Texas at Austin, TX; Tomas Järliden, Director, Bror Hjorths Hus, Uppsala; Frauke V. Josenhans, Acting Head and Assistant Curator, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; Al Kochka, Art Historian, Provincetown, MA; Doris Lanz, Musicologist, Kalaidos Fachhochschule, Zurich; Carol-Marc Lavrillier, Margaret Cossaceanu Lavrillier Archive, Paris; Colin Lemoine, Art Historian and Curator, Musée Bourdelle, Paris; Joanne Lukitsch, Art Historian, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA; Rita Mayo; Sabine Münzenmaier, Research Assistant, Fotostiftung Schweiz, Winterthur; Verena Naegele, Musicologist, Artes, Rombach; Wendy C. Nesmith, Senior Library Specialist, University of Texas Libraries, Austin, TX; Ann Reynolds, Art Historian, University of Texas at Austin, TX; Till Richter, Director, Till Richter Museum; Schloss Buggenhagen; Katharina Rippstein, Archivist, Fotostiftung Schweiz, Winterthur; Veronica Roberts, Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; Jens Rostek, Musicologist, Offenburg; Tim Young, Curator, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT; Richard Shiff, Art Historian, University of Texas at Austin, TX; Veronique Wiesinger, Art Historian, former Director, Fondation, Giacometti, Paris; Del Zogg, Photography Historian, Houston, TX.

Artists' Special Acknowledgements

Thomas Bechtler, Ruedi Bechtler, Peter Bläuer, Suzanne Deal Booth, Tanya Bonakdar, Hannes Brunner, Monique and Max Burger, Doug Dempster, Ingvald Goetz, Hannes Gut, Philipp Kaiser, Rémy Markowitsch, Gayle Mullins, Clare Navarro, Dana Prescott, Lora Reynolds, Marianne Burki, Marc Sabat, Susanne Touw, Jack Risley, Uri Urech, Katharina Vossenkuhl.

Artists' Thank You

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Works by Alberto Giacometti © Succession Alberto Giacometti
(Fondation Giacometti, Paris + ADAGP, Paris) 2019

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