

# BLUM

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Umar Rashid**

***The Kingdom of the Two Californias. La Época del Totalitarismo Part 2.***

**BLUM Los Angeles**

**November 2–December 21, 2024**

**Opening Reception: Saturday, November 2, 5–7pm**

October 25, 2024, Los Angeles, CA—As part of *PST ART: Art & Science Collide*, BLUM is pleased to present Los Angeles-based artist Umar Rashid's third solo exhibition with the gallery, *The Kingdom of the Two Californias. La Época del Totalitarismo Part 2.*

This second installment in Rashid's Epoch of Totalitarianism series rejoins the artist's fictional Frenglish conquerors in the 1800s as they attempt to maintain a stronghold in the Americas. Drawing an intentional parallel to the history of the Spanish Empire in the Californias, Rashid emphasizes the power of the colonial Frenglish as he portrays them with hyperbolic advantages such as weaponry from the twenty-first century, vibrant red muscle cars, and superhuman powers. At the core of this embellished retelling is Rashid's signature mode of allegorical critique and revisioning of the histories embedded within the location of his exhibitions. *The Kingdom of the Two Californias* links the colonial legacy of the former region of Las Californias with California's contemporary issues of racial inequity and police violence as witnessed in the 1992 Los Angeles riots, the 2006 march against House Resolution 4437, and much more.

Acting as a table of contents or a teaser for the exhibition's narrative, *The West Coast is the Best Coast. Or, Map of the Two Californias. 1799-1800* (2024), offers viewers entering *The Kingdom of the Two Californias* a map of the California coastline from San Francisco to Baja. Dotted amongst recognizable city names are the epic battles that Rashid illustrates as part of this presentation. Figures of fallen soldiers, aquatic monsters, women in early 1800s finery, and much more, further freckle this landscape—all foreshadowing the parabolic tableaux that wait in the next rooms.

Peering through *Ishtarian Stargate to points unknown and, right here.* (2024) as if traveling back through time, our story begins on the first room's north wall. *The Battle of Los Cabos (Ante up!) Or, The Daquan Maneuver* (2024) tells of the explosive Battle of Los Cabos—the Frenglish rendition of the Battle of San José del Cabo in the Mexican-American War. Setting the tone for the rest of the exhibition, each canon's flight path scribes a quip of introspection such as "STAGE OF REMORSE REGRET" or "WHAT SHOULD WE HAVE DONE?"

In the next room, *Cosmic lovers leap through the monolith into Pomo country. The Russian trappers engage a beast, Human lovers caress against the stone. A starship attempts an abduction. Or. Owl bear don't give a shit and why don't aliens abduct people of color?* (2024) depicts a lush scene in Northern California where native residents fight a colonial fur trapper with crossbows—only to have their target whisked away by a spaceship. This otherworldly technology lightly references the influx of tech money in the Bay Area that has displaced so many—particularly the Latinx population of San Francisco's Mission District, which declined from 51.9 percent in 1990 to 34.7 percent in 2020. That fact that the Mission District's name originates from Mission San Francisco de Asís, established there by the

# BLUM

Spanish in 1776 to oversee and convert the Native Americans, further reinforces Rashid's critique of generational oppression.

In the final room of the exhibition, *No more parties in L.A. Or. The cause has a cost. Run that!* (2024) features a banner declaring "NO MORE PARTIES IN LA" seemingly in direct retort to the banner of "All Tomorrow's Parties" in the exhibition's first room—indicating that those who have been taken advantage of will endure it no longer. In *No more parties in L.A. Or. The cause has a cost. Run that!*, Rashid's rebels have organized to defeat their colonial oppressors—providing an optimistic anecdote to this chapter in the Frenglish chronicles. Across the room, Rashid's large portrait of *Jairo and Anastasia. The dynamic duo of love, money, and fighting.* (2024) look on in triumph.

On Saturday, November 2, at 4pm, BLUM Los Angeles hosts a conversation with Rashid and Mika Yoshitake, curator of *Breath(e): Toward Climate and Social Justice*, presented by the Hammer Museum for PST ART. This event is free and open to the public.

Umar Rashid (b. 1976, Chicago, IL) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. He received his BA in cinema and photography from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL. His work was featured at The Huntington and the Hammer Museum as part of the biennial *Made in LA 2020: a version*. Recent institutional solo exhibitions include *Ancien Regime Change 4, 5, and 6*, MoMA PS1, Queens, NY (2022); *What is the color when black is burned? (The Gold War Part 1)*, University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, AZ (2018); and *The Belhaven Republic (A Delta Blues)*, University of Memphis Galleries A and B, Memphis, TN (2017). Rashid's work is represented in the public collections of the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY; Jorge Pérez Collection, Miami, FL; Mount Holyoke Art Museum, South Hadley, MA; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV; Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College, Clinton, NY; Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT; and the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town, South Africa, among others.

## About BLUM

BLUM represents more than sixty artists and estates from seventeen countries worldwide, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their practices with a range of global perspectives. Originally opened as Blum & Poe in Santa Monica in 1994, the gallery has been a pioneer in its early commitment to Los Angeles as an international arts capital.

The gallery has been acclaimed for its groundbreaking work in championing international artists of postwar and contemporary movements, such as CoBrA, Dansaekhwa, Mono-ha, and Superflat, and for organizing museum-caliber solo presentations and historical survey exhibitions across its spaces in Los Angeles, Tokyo, and New York. Often partnering with celebrated curators and scholars such as Cecilia Alemani, Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake, the gallery has produced large-scale exhibitions focusing on the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of the 1980s and 1990s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020); and a survey of portraiture through a democratic and humanist lens (2023); among others.

# **B L U M**

BLUM's wide-reaching program includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, video series, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. BLUM Books, the gallery's publishing division, democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books.

Across the three global locations, BLUM prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, it was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. BLUM is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in its physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

## **Press Inquiries**

Nicoletta Beyer  
Communications and Editorial Director, New York  
nicoletta@blum-gallery.com

Christie Hayden  
Communications and Social Media Editor, Los Angeles  
christie@blum-gallery.com