

IMC  
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# Editor's Introduction

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# Intro duction

**5 Minutes** is a collection of informal interviews with the artists and art professionals from the University of Oregon's Visiting Artist Lecture series, conducted by art and art history graduate students. The Visiting Artists Lectures calls upon its artists, curators, educators, and designers to speak on their background and their practice.

5 Minutes is an addendum that looks to create a more personal engagement between the visiting artists and the University of Oregon community. Occurring in studios, offices, and over Zoom, the interviews by their own structure are loose but reflect a meaningful look into the voices of the interviewer and interviewee.

Started in 2015-16 by Christopher Michlig and Wendy Heldmann, this iteration will be the publication's 8th issue. Through their steadfast support and the input of the wider University of Oregon community, we have been able to form an archive of ideas and conversations pressing to our time.

Amy Brener  
in conversation with  
Noelle Herceg

# Amy

# Brener

**Noelle Herceg:** So it was really wonderful hearing your talk last week, and I have a few, maybe selfish, questions about your life as an artist that maybe we'll talk about. But one thing I was super interested in is, you know, your work as you talked about feels both futuristic but also of the past, very sci-fi, too. I am curious if you've ever written fiction, either accompanying the work, or distanced from being a maker.

**Amy Brener:** Yeah, I started out my undergraduate studies in creative writing at Concordia University in Montreal, so I thought that I would become a writer. I was mostly drawn to poetry, but I did try writing fiction as well. My poetry was always a little either surreal or had some sci-fi elements to it. But since then, you know I've dabbled a tiny bit. I really enjoy writing, even though I find it incredibly challenging, but I like the process. I think the video that I showed at

the end [of the talk] was probably the closest I've come to forming any fictional language around my current work.

**NH:** All right. Maybe I'll just jump to another one. How was it growing up with a parent as an artist?

**AB:** It was great.

**AB & NH:** [laughs]

**AB:** I think because it was right in front of me, I kind of avoided the visual arts maybe a little bit for that reason, or specifically sculpture. Not consciously, but it might have been slightly intimidating for me. Or just growing up, you know, already having this sensibility ingrained into you ... Yeah, I mean, I talked about in my lecture how I would go to my dad's studio from an early age; so I think that just seeing the way that he



moved around his studio and looked at things and experimented, and especially how he experimented with found objects things that he collected, or you know, toys that he'd stolen from me [laughs]. I think it opened me up at a young age to the possibilities of what you could do with materials. I think it was just natural for me to go into something creative. There was no inclination towards anything other than the creative arts, whether it was writing, or music, or eventually visual arts.

**NH:** Yeah, I loved when you said everyday materials could take on magical properties. I'm curious about what you might define as 'the sacred' in your work. Are there existing rituals around making the magical or the sacred?

**AB:** For me, the one personal element, or we could call it a sacred element, is using my dad's face cast. That's the one material that I think of in that way. And then the rest of it is trying to form structures that have the appearance of being elevated in some way. What is the word I'm thinking of? You know, resembling something monumental, or something that serves some memorial function, or something like that. So I guess I'm talking more about kind of like sacred structures, or seemingly-sacred structures, let's just say, I don't actually think of them like that. But placing all of these everyday materials into something that has that appearance, or that seems to have that significance to it.

**NH:** I also think of significance in symbol, or almost like hieroglyphic, and how objects are laid out, and I think about language, and like Derrida's *differance*, and in one of the images, I was curious if you used both the mold and the cast? Or, if you ever have used your molds as part of the piece, and what that might do to the symbol that's being kind of removed, but then comes back to its origin in a way?

**AB:** Yeah I think it's happened incidentally in the past, but I haven't made a conscious effort to turn molds into finished pieces. But it's something I've considered, because I think the molds themselves can be interesting ... I haven't shown them as finished artworks at this point. I thought about a number of things, like I've thought about making monoprints from the rubber molds, because you could ink them up and run them through a press. You know there's a few things I thought about doing, but I just haven't. I think there's room for development there.

**NH:** Yeah, that's exciting. Do you keep all of your molds?

**AB:** Not all of the ones for the silicone, because they can just be broken down - I mean for the Flexi. I haven't kept all of the molds for the Flexi Shields because they tend to fall apart after a while. But anything that I've made that's a silicone mold, I keep.

**NH:** I know, in your talk, the question about collecting came up and you said, 'Oh, well, I just had a lot already that I kind of choose from.' But what is your collection process like? How do you go about acquiring materials and found objects?

**AB:** In the past I would find stuff on the street a lot, or when I've had opportunities to be able to go to dumps or free stores I would gather stuff there. Otherwise, in more recent years, I've just wandered through dollar stores and picked stuff out based on what will fit in the compartments of the work, of the mold. And you know I'm looking for things that have a variety of use values. So I like to find things that are either for grooming, or I'll gather eating utensils, hardware, small tools - or miniaturized tools - like those little eyeglass screwdrivers. There'll be pills, and things for sustenance. For the Omni Kits and for the Flexi Shields now, I like a wide variety of different objects that have different uses,

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utilitarian objects and then some decorative as well.

**NH:** Do you have designated days, like you know you need to acquire things? Or are you just out and about, and let things kind of come to you?

**AB:** I definitely set aside time for it. I mean, it's just when things seem to be running low and then I'll have to go out. But there's not a time during the week that I do it, or anything. I have quite a large arsenal of things, but then it becomes, you know, you need the specific color for this particular work and then you have to go source that somewhere. But I have many little drawers full of these things that I try to keep somewhat organized, but that doesn't always work.

**NH:** Yeah, I definitely know how that goes. Well, maybe last question, something maybe lighter. I'm wondering if you have any advice for grad students as they're finishing their MFA. What happens, or what would you tell them in post-grad life?

**AB:** Um, let's see. First of all, I feel like I put way too much [laughs] this is probably bad advice...I feel like I put way too much effort and energy into creating, like, the most impactful thesis show. And I felt like too much time was directed toward exhibition presentation at this early stage in which I maybe shouldn't have been focused as much on presentation and I should have been focused more on the work itself. So that's kind of a regret of mine, is just all of that attention to creating this perfect show, making this big splash, because it was in New York City and you felt that kind of pressure at that time. So I would say don't let that get you sidetracked too much. Of course, it's important to have a good show, but it's more important to start to build the work that you want to continue exploring afterwards. And I don't know, it's just different, because I was in New York City, so it's like, the advice I would give someone there would be different than most places, I think.

But I guess finding a community that you feel inspired by and a place to settle for a

while, at least, where you feel challenged and inspired by your surroundings and the people around you, and you're being kind of held accountable to actually make the work and do the work. And apply to lots of residencies. Skowhegan was really important for me, and there's lots of other residencies out there that just really push you. I think finding those extra pushes after grad school is really important.

**NH:** Yes, absolutely. Well, thank you for that, that's all really great advice.

**AB:** And if I was gonna say something really cynical, I would say get a lot of credit cards –

**AB & NH:** [laughs]

**AB:** – which is kind of my advice for artists living in New York City is like, there's no way to afford this. I had a rotation of credit cards. You do the thing where you fill one up, and you have to get another one to pay that off, you know. It's really bad advice, but like, I feel like that's the only way I was able to survive in this city for ten plus years, being an adjunct,

and the expense of renting a studio and an apartment there. And like maybe you sell some work, but you're just cobbling things together, trying to make it. It's not really a sustainable situation. I think trying to find something sustainable is better. For yourself, somewhere, in some way.

**NH:** Yeah, that's good advice. It feels financially impossible to think about moving to the city.

**AB:** It's just gotten more and more expensive, and it's just becoming a place for the wealthy. I mean, yes, there's still vibrancy there but, I don't know. Do you know where you're going to end up?

**NH:** Um, no, not yet, and it's kind of exciting that it's just wide open.

**start to build the work that you want to continue exploring afterwards.**

# Dianna

# Frid

**David Peña:** I wanted to start with one question...What's your favorite book? It's just kind of a casual question.

**Dianna Frid:** Like a novel or something?

**DP:** Any kind of book that you want to talk about.

**DF:** My favorite book right now...and I have been thinking about it a lot because I just read it in Spanish, although I first read it in English, is *The Taiga Syndrome* by Cristina Rivera Garza. It's a very brief book; it's really rich. It's about so many themes including language. It's about translation, it's about detection, it's about deforestation...it just does so many things and is still mysterious...and that last part is what makes it really remarkable.

**DP:** Amazing, I can't wait to research that further. I'm always curious about what artists are reading or where their interests lie, espe-

cially when it comes to potential for your own work and how it could navigate your practice. So you mentioned translation and language... from my own perspective, I'm coming from a border and into a space where I don't have to speak Spanish and it's felt kind of heavily... I guess my question is how does translation between language, medium, format, play a role in your work?

**DF:** That's a great question. There's ways in which English is now my strongest language and I have been trying to learn Spanish as an adult. I knew Spanish as a child and as a teenager so I notice myself translating in my head when I'm speaking in Spanish, I'm thinking in English and I love that. I think it is an asset to have these ways of thinking of language as crossing over. I think that one of the reasons why I work with language might have to do with being in-between languages or in one language. The one I call the stepmother lan-



guage, or my birth language. Other ways in which language and translation work...translation is always a process. It's something that we can come back to. Let's say that there is a source that you draw from and from that source there are so many ways of re-thinking it. So that's one of the ways in which the model of translation works for me. There's also translation and interpretation and then there's the other thing that I do which is transcription...and so, is transcription a form of translation? Or is it a form of taking something and then re-writing it in another way? These are some of the kinds of questions that I ask because the transcriptions that I make are translations into another medium, another material, another substance. So maybe it's not a linguistic translation but it's a substance translation.

**DP:** Great, I love that answer!

**DF:** Oh I had it all thought out...

[Laughs]

**DP:** Well you already kind of mentioned it. My next question was going to be what language do you think in? I find myself in this space always trying to...hablar en español porque...I feel a sense of loss in not practicing it or using it. Being second generation Mexican American and always feeling a sense of loss the farther I'm away from family and culture. These are things I think about a lot.

**DF:** I think that I mostly think in English but when I enter the space of Spanish when I'm reading and I find a word...you know today I was reading this word *désamour*. There's *amor* and *désamor*. There's no translation, I don't think, in the English language for what *désamour* is. It's almost like...stop loving somebody basically. When you look it up in the dictionary it says *heartache*. It's not the same...because you could be the one who falls out of love...so those are the things that

are really interesting, it's like how we can say things in one language and cannot say it in another and vice versa.

**DP:** That's really interesting. Maybe it's tied to cultural understanding or why is it the case that you can't translate it?

**DF:** That's also the difficulty when it becomes something that there's an impasse because there is no word in a language that...there needs to be a word even if there isn't.

**David:** Well it's almost 5 minutes but I had one more question. What is the importance of independent publishing?

**Dianna:** You know I never thought about that other than to say that it is important. I guess it's not so much about the publishing only, it's also about the distribution right? One nowadays can publish independently, but then what happens with no distribution? I think it's about distribution and that's the real challenge. I don't know if that's the angle of your question, if it's commercial or if it's a venture of publishing and disseminating. Independent publishers probably have less access to distribution and that's a real problem right? Powerful publishers will immediately have publicists and big functions of creating a buzz around a book where an independent publisher less so unfortunately.

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It's something that  
we can come back to.**

Catherine Haggarty  
in conversation with  
Erin Langley

# Catherine Haggarty

# Pech Merle

**Erin Langley:** First question. I want to hear about your experience in French caves.

**Catherine Haggarty:** Well I'll talk about this today a lot, but I will say that the French Caves were cold and damp and beautiful. Although I knew about the French caves before I went to see them in person, I don't think I was really prepared for how monumental they were. Despite that they were also quite small sometimes and also not all very clear anymore. Some were archived really well, some were not. And I only got to see one specific cave underground, which was Pech Merle, which is in the south of France, in a really small village. It's not the oldest cave in history. I think, arguably, that's a cave in Indonesia. Recently it's been found. It's upwards of 47,000 years old and a lot of drawings. We know caves were made thousands of years before, of course, but the drawings specifically.

So Pech Merle has a beautiful cave that my husband and I went to and walked in and out of. There's sort of like a creepiness to these caves and also this energy that you can see in the drawings and paintings whatever you want to refer them to. I consider them drawings. People will say cave paintings, certainly, they have pigment, and all this. But they're really reliant on the line, so this is sort of a larger conversation about the delineation of painting drawing as categories, which is more of a modern thing. But the cave drawings were so effortless and beautiful. Their line quality is stunning and the use of silhouettes the use of puffed pigment through hollowed sticks.

What it did for me was provide me with like the sort of direct experience with a primal activity and then number two it really set me free in terms of like a permission slip to embark on a new sort of body of work. It also reminded



me of the simplicity in which images can be made in terms of communication. Line, atmospheric perspective of line, sfumato right. All of these different ways to make things look like they have air to them. They knew that like a long time with no information.

**EL:** Right, that actually brings me to another question. I really loved reading a passage from your artist statement where you wrote about pattern as a tool to build an environment that defies the idea that animal forms might live in a specific space. We think about patterns as things that have a sequence and an expectation, but I'm interested in this idea of patterns becoming an environment for something unexpected. Can you speak a little of that or is that of interest to you at all?

**CH:** Well that's an interesting question. So the idea is that pattern can be a product or part of a sequence and a logic and an order, but that it can also be a place where divergence happens and predictability is broken?

**EL:** Something like that, yeah because of that predictability, it creates maybe a backdrop or a plane to insert something unpredictable.

**CH:** I think within any structure, whether or not it's a grid. Right, so look at the grid, historically, it's used for urban planning, for math, for structural intelligence that helps us as humans understand things in relation to scale. Within any structure, like a grid or even a sort of strict pattern, there is a possibility of divergence. And usually within strict structures, the best versions that's happened because they're really specific.

And so in terms of the role of patterns in the work, or what I'm thinking, or was thinking specifically in that body of work, with this idea that I was interested in animals as a subject; but it was a departure point for me to love and appreciate their patterns and to sort of anthropomorphize their patterns. And

because I don't deal with space in a physical way, in a way in the picture plane, where it is a defined space that I enter, something that relies on linear perspective. My paintings don't operate on that perspective; they use more of a stacked sort of schematic approach. Pattern as a way for me to conflate the edges of form and build an environment around the subject at hand, while not trying to align with the subject.

So it sounds pretty confusing, but basically if I take a cheetah or some kind of animal, I was interested in or a fox, I would focus on the fur and the pattern and the texture and use that form and that language to sort of frame the animal or defy the sort of idea of where they are; because it's not about where they are in my work. It probably won't ever be, but it's like this reduction of details and fragments about the subjects that I love, that then become the subject. So it's like squeezing a subject and abstracting it allows you to open up to something more specific that I definitely cannot predict, which is of interest to me.

**EL:** I wanted to ask you about how your painting is pointed towards a few different things. There's this notion of a glyph or drawing or painting, but your treatment of color and light in the work of boats like an almost Las Vegas strip style neon. Are you interested in this play between something maybe elemental and then something "manmade" or like the "natural unnatural."

**CH:** That's a great question. I've never been to Las Vegas. But I've gotten that before .. I think I'll try to be concise here, but in 2016, 17. and 18 when Trump got elected I was living in a warehouse studio alone and going on a lot of bad dates and going through a lot of heartbreak and my relationship to color was more formal before that experience. And when I kind of had things stripped bare and elements of life very direct in my life,

politics or personal things, and then living in this crazy space, I actually latched on to higher saturation colors as sort of a coping mechanism to deal with grief.

That's not predictable I'm sure, no, I think that your associations are probably pretty correct in some ways. But they were truly a coping mechanism for me to not worry about local color, completely inverse the idea of logic of predictability of what color should be aligned with something. And it was sort of a way for me to deal with a lot of grief, and that relationship to color is now grown and changed a little bit, but I mean that sort of inversion of a logical color scheme in a painting was interesting to me because it reflected a sort of a disassociation I felt with how things work at the time. So I needed joy, and I could get joy from color but everything else was a shitstorm to me.

**EL:** I think we should end there, that's great.

**So I needed joy,**

**and I could get joy**

**from color but everything else**

**was a shitstorm to me.**

JULY

# Hiratsuka

**Lily Wai Brennan:** The biggest thing I wanted to talk to you about is that you are really carefree in your subject matter and I like that it is humorous. I feel like the way that you talk about your work; it really reflects your personality. I'm just wondering where you got to the point where you felt comfortable being that expressive in your work.

**Yuji Hiratsuka:** You know, I enjoy what I do. But also, I have a little part that tries to entertain the viewer. So searching for something fun would be nice, but my artwork doesn't have eyes. I'm kind of shy and avoiding talking about...some people are like "we need to talk" and confronting subject matter. But I don't think I can do that. Is not that kind of work. What can make the viewer smile? It's not the serious label. It's the mundane kind of daily life, sitting in the house, not in surprising settings. But it still has my personal touch. But the point is, I like humor. Something with

a cynical touch or a little twist. When you see my artwork you may smile. I don't want to make people upset. So basically something that is fun in life.

**LWB:** Do you ever find that people try to instill more serious content into your work? Do you ever feel like people are searching for that? Or is it read as just playful like how you want it to be?

**YH:** Sometimes people interpret it as serious. I did a barbed wire in a few prints. People talked about Japanese internment in WWII. People say it's interesting and it might be true, but that is not my intention. I like barbed wire because of the tattoo design. [laughter] Anyways, some people try to find deeper meaning or aspects. If you see it like that, that might be interesting and I respect that and I don't want to deny it. But for me it's not my main subject. I do read a newspaper

to learn about what's happening in town, but it doesn't reflect.

**LWB:** So do you reject those opinions then, or do you embrace them, even if you disagree with them?

**YH:** Oh yeah, mhm. I don't like confrontation. I leave it ambiguous. So that means people can see the happy face, sad face, angry face, blue eyes, brown eyes, whatever they can say. And that I enjoy. I don't want to dictate. Or this person or this figure is crying or sleeping. It's up to you. I don't want to define it. That kind of gives me a lot more personal experience. By looking at this, people may like this as this. Don't put the glitters. You can listen to that. Impossible to fix that. One plus one is two. That's math. But here, I like it, I don't like it. This is too big, too small, too empty. And I listen, say "thank you". But I make a decision.

**LWB:** Great well that's it.

**YH:** Art is a very... I don't know... It's therapy. I even had a sad or difficult time, but art starts like a cure. Students say the same things when they are graduating. I tell you, you don't make much money. That's true. A little money. You don't make a fortune. Unless you are in a museum and New York gallery. You don't make much money, but that's not the priority. Basically, I was free from the stress many people deal with. I was independent. There was no boss. I make mistake but I can make it okay. If you're a dentist and make a mistake, your business gets closed, even though they make a lot of money. Maybe they like it challenging. But for me I like it easy and I'm still okay. I do strange things, "oh he's an artist..." and then they forgive me.

**One plus one is two.  
That's math.  
But here, I like it, I don't like it.  
This is too big, too small,  
too empty.  
And I listen, say  
"thank you".**

**But I make a decision.**

# Andrew Thomas

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5 Minutes

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Andrew Thomas Huang  
in conversation with  
Ashley Campbell

# Huang

**Ashley Campbell:** Your talk tonight is titled Queer Morphologies and Digital Spirits. Can you tell me what inspired that title and how each of these things function in your work?

**Andrew Thomas Huang:** Yeah, I've been thinking a lot about things like when I was kid, I would watch Star Wars and Lord of the Rings and I felt like I identified more with the side characters like the robots and the aliens. I felt like I needed a term to describe that feeling of otherness and trying to center that identity. So "queer morphologies" is a term I came up with to summarize that. I'm talking about "digital spirits" because I've been thinking a lot about how technology can be a space for spiritual inhabitation. Or maybe the other way around where our spiritual lineage can actually be a technology or a form of data storage.

**AC:** I'm really interested in the way this hyper digital aesthetic intersects with a very handmade craft aesthetic in your work. In art, I find a lot of people want to keep that separated and there's this weird fine line you have to walk while making art that incorporates craft. Is that something you think about and if so, how do you navigate it?

**ATH:** For me craft was a place of safety as a kid. I think tech can be such a bro-ey space, I guess it was my instinct to keep craft in there. As long as there is a human input in the tech that we use, as long as you feel the humanity behind the input then it produces more interesting results.

**AC:** Music and sound are huge elements in your films. When you aren't working with a specific musician, how do you approach making your soundscapes for your films?

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# When I was kid, I would watch Star Wars and Lord of the Rings and I felt like I identified

26 I felt like I needed a term to describe that feeling of otherness more with the side characters like the robots and the aliens. and trying to center that identity.

5 Minutes

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**ATH:** I am very particular. I have been doing a lot of my own sound design, though I admit the thing that I'm not good at is sound mixing. I'm also just not a professional sound designer, so I always implement the help of a sound designer and mixer. But I think when I am editing, rhythm is such an important part of what I do, especially if it is not narrative. So I try to think of sound in a musical way and make sure that I am building a rise and fall with the sonic sculpt.

**AC:** I read in an interview where you said that to be an artist in the age of capitalism, one must be an entrepreneur. And though I agree, it is rarely talked about in the art world as a reality of making art into a career. Do you think you could speak a bit on that?

**ATH:** I think whether we like it or not, we are all caught in a straitjacket of capitalism. And I guess you don't have to be an entrepreneur; you could live in a hut in the forest and make whatever the hell you want to make. I don't think that you always have to intertwine your living with your art. But if you want to intertwine your living with your art, then yes unfortunately you have to find a way to monetize what you do, which is a business thing. And I don't think all artists have that instinct. So in a way because we don't have government funding for the arts, it does a lot of people a disservice. And it's one of the reasons why it's so tough to be an artist in the U.S. Especially as an indie filmmaker, where the cost of making video work is just so expensive.

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# Lezley

# Saar

**Sydney Lee:** I wanted to thank you, first off, for your artist talk yesterday. It was so great to hear you talk about your work and your process, really just an amazing talk.

**Lezley Saar:** Thank you.

**SL:** You often spoke about literature and writing in your artist talk, specifically when it comes to the titles of your work. I'm curious what your relationship to writing is? Do you write any of your own stuff? If you do, what are some things you find yourself writing about?

**LS:** Well, I'm not really a writer. I've never tried to write a novel, or poetry, or anything like that. I don't even journal or anything like that. But I really love reading. From early on, I've just been a very avid reader, and am very influenced by reading and that kind of thing. The only writing I will do is with titles. And I

did for that show, *A Conjuring of Conjurers*, I wrote all those strange little stories about each conjurer and their powers and their manifestations and their history. The only time I used the titles from an existing work was that recent show, *Black Garden*, where I took that poem from Antonin Artaud. Yeah, but titles are very important to me, just from the beginning. So I guess that's just about the only type of writing that I do. My daughter is a writer, and she has that natural talent. So I can recognize it and appreciate it. I like those little quirky stupid stories I wrote about the conjurers, but I'm not a great writer, I just love it and appreciate it.

**SL:** I appreciate how you work in a series. Would you mind telling me a little bit more about that? I'm curious to know how you can sense when a series is complete, or if you feel like something is ever complete.



**LS:** Oh, that's a good question. Well the way I work, the process is that sometimes I'll have an idea and jump on it. But I'll finish a show, and there's a bit of a lull, and then I realize I have another show coming up or I just want to start working again, but I haven't got this, like, great idea. So, I'll kind of think about what I want to paint, or like a vague idea and which approach is the best for that. Like, this idea that I vaguely have now about colorism, you know, and privilege with regard to colorism, and just the whole notion of colorism, but how to do it in kind of obscure or my own little weird way. So I'm like, well a good way to do this is just to kind of get back to doing these altered books, because it's theoretical, it's literate, it's sort of an idea thing. So I'll start there, and then I might cross over into the different mediums, as far as painting or banners or assemblage aspects of it. But I'll start with one medium to start with this idea. And then after doing a few pieces, the idea really starts congealing. Okay, this is the theme, and I might come up with a title for it, and I can start talking about it more intelligently. I like to keep all the works around. It really bothers me if a dealer says, 'Oh, let me take some of these.' No, they have to all stick together and be presented. Money is nice, but I don't need them to sell right now, I don't want you taking them because I need to see them, how they're all bouncing off of each other and hopefully completing the theme and the idea, and this might be a little subtle aspect of the idea in this painting. That's really important to me. When it's finished, sometimes I have a few ideas left over, but usually I'm pretty good at thinking, I've got this amount of time to do for this show or this presentation. I'm pretty good at that, figuring out the amount within the different approaches, whether it's banners or painting or altered books. Enough for them to feel like it's fleshed out. I do think I have a pretty good idea about when it's finished.

**SL:** That sounds like a very fluid process.

**LS:** Yeah, definitely. Because I find if you really come up with a, not rigid, but a definite idea, and then start doing the work and fitting very specifically the ideas, that it's a little obvious and flat footed. I like there to be some kind of mystery or just some sort of oddity, like what does this have to do with the topic, I like that. Things feeling a bit off, but it relates somehow. So, I don't want to use the word struggle, but I'm very conscious of things not being too obvious, and trying to keep that in mind. Sometimes it's really good to not have a firm, firm idea at the beginning, and let it evolve that way.

**SL:** So you mentioned at the end of your talk yesterday that you were starting to work in altered books again after years of not making them. I think it's really exciting to revisit a series or method of making after putting it down for so long. What has that process been like for you?

**LS:** Yeah, it's been really nice because painting, you know, I didn't go to art school. I majored in communications, so I never really learned how to properly paint. And it doesn't come easily for me, to be honest. I probably take longer than I should [laughs]. They end up looking how I want them, but I probably approach it pretty ass-backwards. It's really fun to do the altered books because the way I do the covers of them are very collage, assemblage, just very free and fast and easier, kind of. Just like sewing the banners are easier. It's all easier than painting. It's very fun and refreshing. So I'll start with these covers, and then do the little, well they're pretty intricate, the little paintings that go inside. It's fun if it feels right, you know. I didn't feel like doing them for sixteen, eighteen years and now I feel like doing them. I like working small, that's a way to work small, and then have it juxtaposed with the really big banners. It feels great. It's kind of

just about the timing. And I feel my painting's improved, and I'm going to come up with different ideas. I've done mostly anomalies when I did those altered books in the past. So I feel it'd be fresh, and something I've done, I don't feel I'm copying anybody else, so it's me. It feels like the timing is right. There's so much painting out there now, I think I'm interested in seeing mixed media pieces and that's kind of my thing, so that's something I'm excited to go back to.

**SL:** Cool. I have one final question. I'm always interested in knowing what other artists' studio routines are like. Do you have any particular routines when you're preparing to work in the studio?

**LS:** Yeah, well I'm like my mother and my sister Alison, who's also an artist, she's a sculptor. For the longest time she had her studio in her home, too, but then she finally rented another one. We've always had our studios at home, which is nice. I had two children, but also I just being able to work whenever I want to work. Like if it gets to the deadline, I can be working 'til midnight and not in some scary, industrial cold area. So I like to get started in the morning. I have an inside studio in the house, somewhere that I do the smaller work, and then I've converted my garage into a studio where I do the larger work, the banners and the sculptural things. Yeah, I like to get started early, nine o'clock or something like that. Especially during Covid, I put in a lot of hours. Unless there's something else planned, I'm a bit of a hermit anyway. I really enjoy working and staying at home. Usually I work on one piece at a time, but this time I'm working on doing four altered books at the same time, which is a little different for me. But it's kind of nice, especially if I get to some difficult little bit of the painting, and I can move on to something else. So that's kind of new for me, to be working on multiple things at a time. And I have banners going. Working on four different things at the same

time, that's a little bit new for me, but my concentration is there, so I like that. Yeah, for me, I'm a morning person. I just like a good early start and maybe finish, oh, by three, two or three, but that's a lot of hours if you start at nine. I find that's helpful, to try to work every day and get an early start and have multiple things going if you get stuck. And I listen to music.

**SL:** Thank you so much, it's been great to hear about your practice and your process.

**LS:** Well, thank you. I enjoyed the whole thing. Thanks to all the artists and students that shared their work with me, I really enjoyed it.

Michael Sherwin  
in conversation with  
Noa Taylor

# Michael Sherwin

**Noa Taylor:** Related to your talk that you gave yesterday, I wanted to ask a couple questions about some work you didn't necessarily talk about, like the *Searching...* books and the *In The Clouds* images. And I was kind of wondering how your approach to photo books might have changed in the course of making those and into your current practice? And also about the little humorous bits of what we get in those two works.

**Michael Sherwin:** Yeah, I mean, I wanted to talk about those, and I ran out of time. I actually skipped over them in the presentation because I knew I needed minimum, like, twenty minutes for *Vanishing Points*, so unfortunately I skipped right over them. But for both of those, I've done a lot of work with appropriated images. For years I did, with *Searching...* and *In The Clouds*, and also in a series called *Perfect*

*North*, where I appropriated images from the North Pole webcam. I guess, in terms of my book making, the *Searching*, the process of making those books, you know, those were generated from Google image searches. And I was pretty subjective about which images I chose, and how I paired them up. They're not all pairings throughout the book, but, in terms of finding relationships between images that are really generated by a random search engine, I think it was really informative for me and the practice, and what led to some of the strategies in both my work and my book making practice. So those were really informative. And in terms of humor, I think that's in all of my work. There's sort of an underlying narrative or commentary that's sort of social, and oftentimes tinged with irony. And I think I knew that going into it, that what I was going to ask the internet was going to come back, like, scattered, and hilarious at times, and poignant to where



we are as a society. And kind of the same, I have this sort of love-hate relationship with social media. So *In The Clouds* was kind of an expression of that. Like, I hate social media, but it also seems sort of necessary as an artist, especially Instagram for me as a photographer, but, it was kind of an expression of that.

**NT:** You mentioned irony a little bit, and it just sort of clicked into place for me with *Vanishing Points*, when you talked about bits and pieces of irony going on in that work, I was like ‘Oh! That’s what’s happening there.’ Super cool.

**MS:** Yeah, and I’ll mention just a few things about that. I think initially I was sort of looking for that irony, or it was easily accessible, like in the Midwest or the East, when you’re confronted with these ancient mounds and there are chain link fences right in front of it, or garbage, or signage. And then as the project moved West, I noticed that psyche kind of changed as the landscape changed. And I noticed just like being present, in the spaces that were sacred, my interest in finding human components to the landscapes also kind of disappeared. Like, I just want to make a photograph of this place that is kind of a sum representation of the feeling of it, that I have in this place, and kind of less contrived or ironic, intentionally ironic.

**NT:** I have another question sort of about that project, and related to the current one with burying the negatives, and how those seem to be longer term, travel based practices. I was curious about how a daily studio practice might fit into that, if you have one. And also how you might go about prepping for those longer term projects.

**MS:** Yeah, I love that idea of having a daily studio practice, which I don’t have.

**NT & MS:** [laugh]

**MS:** Unfortunately, my studio practice has been scattered and inconsistent with three children in my life, and making this book, that was sort of this epic project. But I think that there is work that has been going on behind the scenes, a lot of which I didn’t share yesterday, and that is not on my website, and that I’ve talked separately about with individuals since I’ve been here, including Ron [Jude]. That’s more of the long term project, I think. *Vanishing Points* was very intentional. I knew what it was, I had to get grants in order to do it. But I didn’t know that I wanted it to be ten years, I never intended it to be that long – the more I read the more it kind of expanded. You know, when you work on something for ten years, it changes a lot, and there are all these other inspirations during that time, projects that happen, and projects that are still happening and growing that I think are informed by those, and that I think inform *Vanishing Points* as well. I just don’t feel like they’re in a state where I can share them yet. But yes, some of those negatives have become a part of the *Buried* series. Those were actually shot while traveling to make images for the *Vanishing Points* project, and they were often images that didn’t fit into that project, or they were negatives that fail, and I thought I should do something with them.

There’s sort of an underlying narrative or commentary that’s sort of social, and oftentimes tinged with irony.

# Lumi

# Tan

Lumi Tan  
in conversation with  
Christian Alvarado

**Christian Alvarado:** How do you look at a room or a space?

**Lumi Tan:** Do you mean like a room or a space for art?

**CA:** Yeah, through the eyes of a curator or even if you find yourself in that mindset in your daily life, how do you think about space or rooms?

**LT:** I generally think about how people move through them. I really think about

the choreography of people seeing things, the rhythm of how people see things or experience things in general. That's what I'm looking at. The way people pace themselves in relation to what they're encountering. I look at lighting, I look at the way things sound and smell. I'm trying to take in all those different aspects at once.

**CA:** Are you a fan of people watching?

**LT:** I am a huge fan of people watching.

**CA:** What's your spot in New York to people watch?

**LT:** I was gonna say that it's all good, but I feel like... Manhattan is not a good place to people watch anymore...

[Laughter]

...because people are very conscious about how they're being looked at. I live in Jackson Heights, Queens, I just moved here a couple months ago... and the main drags are the most amazing cinematic people watching spots. It's almost like being in midtown but it's in a residential neighborhood and there's a density of activity, it's incredible.

**CA:** Yeah that sounds like fun! Switching gears slightly, when you're at The Kitchen and you're working with an artist, how do you start the conversation with them about how to present their work? What questions are you asking conceptually or practically to get the ball rolling?

**LT:** I always ask what they have felt like they haven't been able to do in prior presentations of their work or with other institutions. I'm always asking what they feel they need at this point and that can change at any time to establish the juncture in their work that they feel like they're at. If they want to go in a completely different direction, if they want to keep going with what they're doing, which is usually not the case. I always ask what they know about The Kitchens history and try to explain a lot of that... Not that that should impose on them, but just for them to kind of understand a framework that they're entering into. Those are the first questions I ask.

**CA:** Yeah, I remember watching your interview three weeks ago at UO. That artist talk that you gave, the curator talk, however you want to put it. You were talking about how some of these artists have never done experimental performance in this kind of way or worked with The Kitchen in that capacity. Are they nervous about it? Or are they super pumped?

**LT:** I mean I think they should be nervous.

[Laughter]

I mean, I think that most of the time it's not just new for them it's also new for us. Whatever they're trying to do is also new for us so that's something that's very special. We're both taking a leap of faith. It's not just watching and the artists going into this new direction being like oh we're just comparing them to everyone else...

[Laughter]

...trying to see if they're going to make it or not, but we're really right alongside the process. I honestly can't think of a commissioning project that I have done where I'm like, oh, I know how to do this. Every single time I have no clue. Me and our incredible production team and those artists are going to do this together.

**CA:** I'm wondering... you don't have to name names or anything like that, but, what was your most recent memory of being "Oh my God. What's happening? Can we do that?"

[Laughter]

**LT:** I think I do get to that point with most projects. It's really hard for me to see things outside of the lens of like COVID right now so a lot of it was just so practical about making things work in a time when like no one else was doing performance or no one else was working other than a film studio or something like that. These people... industries with much larger resources than experimental performance. How they were just handling bodies together in a room. Just seeing those really practical challenges of trying to make this work in tandem with the actual conceptual challenges of making something work is always really generative in that way.

**CA:** What you've talked about is a little bit related to my next question. In the talk you gave three weeks ago you said that the values of performance were emotion, vulnerability, slowness and transparency. I'm wondering if you could elaborate further on the ideas you may have around that kind of intimacy as it relates to the manipulation of space, or specifically right now the interaction with an audience, especially during this plague time.

**LT:** I think all those things have really been heightened. It's not that I think those are

the only values. Those are the ones that are hardest to embrace in the context of an institution because institutions are always looking for clarity, you know, things that are really easy to digest and really legible. I don't know of any performer that doesn't have serious PTSD from this past year of having everything canceled, not understanding what their future will look like. The constant stress of trying to keep up with COVID protocols. Right now we're really in a space where artists want to be with an audience. There's also a lot of fear around it. I don't want to become a super spreader, I haven't been in front of an audience for a really long time... and so I think that intimacy particularly is really heightened right now in terms of... how can I recapture what I had with audiences before, but acknowledge that we're in a completely different time.

I think a lot of this has been dealt, from what I've seen, with artists wanting not caring about how many people are in the audience, but who that audience is and how you know respond to the work. We've done performances for one person, we've done performances for 30 people and it's all about trying to re-familiarize yourself with what this agreement is basically between the artist and the audience.

**CA:** It's a strange sort of social agreement that you kind of sign up for once you enter a space like that right?

**LT:** Exactly.

**CA:** So making sure that the audience is both comfortable or uncomfortable depending on the kind of performance you want. I imagine it's super important to think about, especially in this time.

**LT:** Yeah, absolutely. What are the limits? I'm so grateful that this audience came to see during an ongoing pandemic.

[Laughter]

How much can I continue to alienate them?

[Laughter]

I think that has actually been an ongoing theme in this season. When we were doing just online programming it was such a different thing. We know the audience out there can just turn this off at any time, but we're still thinking about them in another way. We can't see them but they're still a big part of this project.

**CA:** Do you feel like that challenge is, in a way, freeing or more restricting than it was? Or is it this toeing the line?

**LT:** You mean the challenge of a live audience? Or an audience in general?

**CA:** Yeah, especially the shifting audience. The one that you have to retrain to be a part of this social experiment in a kind of way. Do you feel like that experience has freed you up from some of the things that you would have had to do before with a prior audience? Does that make sense?

**LT:** Yeah, totally. I think that it's freeing in one sense... not that our goals were ever to just please an audience... it's not like we didn't want to do that, but you know... I think that it's freeing in that we know that everyone who is coming out right now really wants to be there. It's just much more intentional in that way, and I think that is freeing. It does allow for a different space to be created between the artist and the audience in it. I really don't want to say that the stakes are lower...

[Laughter]

...but I think that everyone is much more accepting of if this is not exactly the thing that I think it is it's okay, because I made



**I really think about the choreography of people seeing things, the rhythm of how people see things or experience things in general.**

this effort to come out here and it's really important to support this artist...

**CA:** Yeah, it sounds like the people are really hungry and they want to actually see this.

**LT:** Exactly, exactly.

**CA:** That's really cool. I appreciate that too. This is going to be my last question. It's a little bit of an easy one, maybe a hard one, I don't know. Is there a kind of media or literary, video, theater, whatever, that you return to to inform your work as a curator and producer?

**LT:** If I really had to choose one, video is it. That comes from the history of The Kitchen as a space for video but also our relationship to video now. Not only on the consumer level, we're all so acclimated to watching video, to consuming video... In a time when it's very hard to afford a studio or to be able to store things and have physical objects around. I think video... the fact that at this point you can make it anywhere. It's relatively easy to transport around and circulate to other tuitions and things like that. I think all of those conditions of video have just made it into this medium that artists have so much freedom with. There's such incredible history within video already, even though it is relative to painting or sculpture it's such a young medium. So much has happened in the past few decades with it and it's been such a way for people to be introduced to art, you know "art."

**CA:** So what do you return to in video?

**LT:** I mean...

**CA:** It's a hard question I know.

**LT:** Yeah it's really hard... to me it's always just been about how it allows people to make their own worlds, while drawing in these really shared experiences. For me it is a lot about artists of the late 80's. People who

have been using appropriated imagery to create something both new and very familiar, I think that's the thing that I always return to. I think we obviously have such a different relationship to that right now but it's still as potent, you know?

**CA:** Right, of course. I thought that was a fantastic answer, you did great. I think with that, we're a little over time, so thank you for talking with me, I really appreciate it.

**LT:** Yeah thanks so much for your great questions.

# Pei-Hsuan Wang

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5 Minutes

2021—2022

# Wang

Pei-Hsuan Wang  
in conversation with  
Will Zeng

**Will Zeng:** Don't follow old people into their homes or else they'll eat you.

**Pei-Hsuan Wang:** Finish your meal. Otherwise, this God or creature is gonna eat you. It's intimidation.

**WZ:** I was thinking back to the prisoner video that you showed and that childhood logic gets reflected back to us where, Iris, who was very young at the time, was like "You're my prisoner. I'm going to tie you here." and I see that with my niece. It's that very binarastic good, bad logic bouncing back into relationships with other people.

**PHW:** With the video I was also thinking about this untethered creativity that kids have, all these games that they would come up with that kind of just like, I don't know.

**WZ:** Yeah.

Do you identify any specific place as home? You mentioned traveling a lot as part of your practice and appreciating the ability to keep moving on to the next place. But do you kind of locate a place in the world that's like, "Oh, this is where I feel the most understood" or like "That's where I function the best"?

**PHW:** I think it's hard. I don't think there's one place, I would call home. not like completely.

I feel like each place I stayed in for longer periods of time, I assign certain aspects of home to them but there's never like a holistic home experience, in one place. Even for Taiwan there's a fictional/home kind of aspect to my feelings about Taiwan.

I left Taiwan to study in the states and I stayed here for eight years. Then I went back to Taiwan for a few years and during that time I had wished that I would find some kind of true be-

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longing there but it never happened for me for some reason. So there's always this idea of Taiwan being a fictional home.

My adulting process really happened here in the States. A lot of the world views that shaped me were developed here in the States. So, this place for me, acts as a different realm for belonging to. So I don't quite feel like I belong completely to either of these places.

Right now I'm still familiarizing myself with Europe. But I do have to say maybe I feel at home the most when I am with my loved ones and that's kind of split between the two.

**WZ:** There's a lot of homes, a lot of people to find community in and find home in. It's not specifically one.

**PHW:** It's okay to feel like an outsider to certain levels everywhere you go. It asks us to enter multiple perspectives and try to understand the environment we're in and the people we are surrounding ourselves with too.

**WZ:** You mentioned the generational difference between yourself and Iris; Iris having been born in the states and you being born in Taiwan. This raised a question that I've been thinking a lot about, is there a basis for organization or collectivity or some connection?

Personally my parents were born in Guangzhou and I was born in San Francisco and so there's this difference between first and second generation Asian Americans. What is there to learn from each other? What is there to work around?

**PHW:** I feel like it's yet to be explored. So when my sister was pregnant with Iris. My mother flew over from Taiwan to Seattle to help with the pregnancy and to help with the child. My mother ended up staying in the States for over a little over 10 years. I think

that for her it was a very very difficult and challenging time.

You know, these mother or auntie figures, from Taiwan or from East Asia, there's this sense of responsibility and the sense of trying to take care of everything is so strong, and that is not exactly what is "the American Way." In a way, my mother struggled a lot with that.

And I think her frustration somehow sort of also affected the dynamics in her household, my sister's household. And she was extremely helpful with the children at the same time.

She didn't feel like she fully fit in with my sister's family, and that can be really hard because if she was to, to be in that situation in Taiwan she would be hyper respected and hyper central there.

**WZ:** Revered, like a matriarch.

**PHW:** Yeah, that was not the case for her in the States and that was really difficult. She was a retired teacher so she had this really kind of rigid idea of how to train and how to raise children that is kind of not the way my brother in law wanted to implement, and it was just very hard. So, there is already a generational discordance between her and my sister.

When it comes to Iris, she's still so malleable. I am still getting to find out what exactly her personality or and her worldview is going to become in the next few years. She is very much like a sponge. And I think she has a sense of her identity in her hybridity, but she does not see it as an anomaly. For her right now it's just a matter of fact. I think for her the idea of whiteness is not so developed in her mind yet.

I'm really curious because for her generation she has lots of friends who are also with

mixed parents and in a lot of multi heritage homes. So it's becoming more and more, more common. And I wonder what kind of conversations, they have when they grow up. What conversation would they have for their generation. I'm very curious. Yeah, yeah.

**WZ:** There's a lot in the act of a mother in law coming in to help raise a child. I feel like that might not even happen in a lot of households in the States. I don't know if that's more an East Asian thing or a more diasporic thing. There's this emphasis that I need to impress upon you and I need to share myself with this new family member.

**PHW:** This act of almost selflessness, not completely. You're also expecting some kind of, like you said, reverence.

**It's okay to feel like an outsider to certain levels everywhere you go.**



# Lewis

Lewis Watts  
in conversation with  
Joseph Sussi

# Watts

**Joseph Sussi:** I saw the exhibit this morning of your portraits and book series. And I noticed, and you also mentioned, the importance of archival work and research. As an art historian myself, I also am very interested in the archive. So, I have noticed how the archive informs your work, and I'm also interested in what you think about how the archive informs and creates history. And thinking of particularly, I've been really impacted and kind of interested when I read Christina Sharp's book *On Blackness and Being*, when I first read it, a lot of that is about the gaps in the archive, and the way that the archives also erase things, erase history.

**Lewis Watts:** It's like, who gets to tell the story?

**JS:** Exactly. And I actually wanted for you to speak on that topic a little bit more, of how you interact with archives, how you think

about these gaps, how history is constructed by them in some ways.

**LW:** Well, I was a history and political science major as an undergrad. When I transferred to UC Berkeley as a senior and, because I had enough units in that, I took my first art class since middle school. I think my parents had me on a college track, so that was like, what are you doing? And I was for a while going to do a double major, but the draft, so I finished. And then I got into the graduate program I told you about. It's a graduate program for non-architecture majors. And the idea was that they wanted a wider variety of disciplines to be in the field. I sort of did it because I wasn't sure what to do next, but it was incredible in that it was a great educational experience. We immediately started working in firms and designing right from the get go. And then I was able to take other classes – I took a photo class for two weeks and said

that's what I wanted to do. So anyway, I always joke that after thirty seconds, I said, well now that I'm an artist, all that stuff about culture and history is behind me, but of course that's all my work's about [laughs]. So I would say, that because of that interest, I've always been interested in the marks left in the environment and on buildings, which are a kind of archive. They sort of represent who's been there, who's marked it, and also nature. And then the people that leave the marks, whether that is specifically archive or not. But for these books, this is at The Amistad Center for Art & Culture which is in Hartford, Connecticut, and it's a place I've shown work and done talks there. And I was sitting in the curator's office and there was a stack of books. I picked one and it was Frederick Douglass's from 1850, a first edition, just beautiful. And I started, 'What is this!?', you know? And he said that these have been in storage, and we're having artists respond to the archives. So immediately I knew what I wanted to do. Sometimes I have to work my way in, but I knew when I saw that work that I wanted to scan it and reproduce it on maybe handmade paper, make prints, something a little different. So I've made two or three trips back there, because they have a lot of 19th century and later African-American literature. But they also have a lot of racist literature, which we saw a few examples of that. And so, it was interesting that those photos would be in a Black-serving institution, and they're probably the only other place that some of those books would be, like in a private Southern library. I knew immediately that I wanted to scan them, but I wasn't sure if I wanted to show them. I was sort of, you know, fascinated, and it became obvious that I needed to have that dialogue. I think that it's interesting, because they picked the portraits, and actually no one said anything about it, but I was wondering if people would say, 'well this work seems so completely different.' But it's all based in my initial interest in, say, Black lives and

history and how that gets manifested. And one of the ways that happens is that when I'm working on a particular project or an event. I noticed that I photographed what was going on with the event, but I would also be attracted to photographing certain people who, you know, I sort of realized, from a lot of different places, seemed to be people who felt comfortable in their own skin. They were not being defined by certain media depictions of people of color. They were presenting themselves where they weren't trying to overcompensate or anything, they were just being them. I hadn't thought about it, but it seemed to be that those were the people I was really drawn to photograph, and I thought that became a whole other sort of thing that together had a different kind of narrative. So what I thought was interesting was a lot of the book covers are means of expression by people in history, and at some level is another way of manifesting that same condition or set of conditions. On some level, everything I make has become a sort of archive, you know when it becomes a media product, it has a different view. I mean it's the same thing, what gets captured, what gets caught, and then what gets put out in the world, so it's been interesting, and I don't know if I'm trying to overcompensate, it's just what I do. So it's been exciting that I have that and I've been lucky enough to have something out in the world. That's kind of a relief. When I think about archives, what gets erased and what gets shown. I guess one of the results is it sort of compensates for, in the past, when things were either ignored, or —

**JS:** — or actually erased.

**LW:** Absolutely. The book that I'm going to talk about briefly, in fact I have a copy of it, it's called *Harlem of the West*. It's basically about this community in San Francisco that started right after Pearl Harbor. It was the Japanese community in San Francisco, and when the Japanese were interned, simultaneously

they needed people to come work on the ship yards. There was a sort of migration all through the 20th century, but World War II really kicked it up. And this was in a community that was an entertainment community, so almost immediately, when the Japanese left, in this community, the Fillmore district, there was like ten, twenty jazz clubs. People brought their musical taste with them, and it was almost immediate. And it was thriving, because there was full employment because everyone's working the ship yards. And then it became, or even when it started, there were certain people in the city who said that this is where we should do the first 'urban renewal'.

**JS:** It's so entrenched with urban beautification.

**LW:** The freeways are probably the biggest people mover and social engineer, actually. So they were actually able to, in the interest of modernization, displace a lot of people. And they were put on a list. Two families actually ended up coming back in the middle, community activists started the process, because they tore down all these Victorians, so architectural preservation came from this, this has been studied a lot. And people dispersed to other parts of the Bay Area. And any history of this, same thing, was just erased. So somebody sent me to a shoe shine parlor. You know the Fillmore Auditorium, this is right across. The Fillmore Auditorium was originally, well first it was built in the '20s, and it was to where Black people couldn't even go to it. And then a Black entrepreneur and promoter took it over, so I have posters of Little Richard, and Ike and Tina Turner, and before that some Jazz music. Then Bill Graham used it for some benefit and the owner, Charles Sullivan, was killed and Bill Graham took it over and started a whole empire. So it's interesting that that kind of continued. And someone from the shoe shine parlor, he had on his walls this history, and it's kind of like, where did this come from? And it turns out that some of the people had given

him when they lost their shops, and then he'd been collecting other stuff. And he actually — I got all excited about it — he wanted nothing to do with it because he was very suspicious, you know, because he'd been jacked around the city. I saw him, and then he died immediately, and I was hired to do research because they wanted to make a jazz preservation. I came back after he told me he wasn't going to talk to me, because my friend Mildred's brother was good friends with him. So when I came back he was gone, and the halls were bare. It took a while to find out that he'd had a stroke, and the landlord was taking all the photographs, about to throw them out. The barber across the street, you know barbershops and beauty parlors are the kind of archivists of the Black community. And so Reggie, the barber across the street, saw what was happening, collected all the work, and had most of it just sitting in his back room for like five or six years. So I said, 'do you know what happened,' and he said, 'oh, they're in my back room.' And I got really excited about it, and he was excited, and sort of let me use them. In fact, I learned Photoshop restoring the photographs. In a lot of ways, this changed my career. There's this whole controversy about whether you can improve, or keep the images as they were. I wanted these photographs to be of a level, like the clubs would hire photographers, and they would photograph and maybe go home at two or three in the morning, develop the film, make prints, and come back at four when the people were still there and sell some prints. Some of the prints were old and had started to deteriorate. But all these guys had big Speed Graphics, large format cameras and so on. So I restored a certain amount and showed them someplace, and then a woman who had worked for Bill Graham, and he had hired her to research for the jazz club, so she knew where they were. She got hired as an associate producer for the educational station that was doing a documentary on the Fillmore. And we put out the word, looking

for more photographers and archives, and they started coming, we started finding people. We both said we need to do a book. And this is actually the fourth edition of the book. It just went out of print from Heyday at Berkeley. At some point we may do another one, I'm not sure. I'd like to, because I like having them out there. It's interesting that it has sort of half-lives. There's an exhibit, there's a San Francisco history gallery that's being built at San Francisco airport. In fact, just last week I went to see the work because they commissioned me to print work.

**JS:** You know, that's interesting, because it's kind of coming back to, it's one of the first things you said. You said that the marks, and you had a little hesitance of whether or not this is an archive, the marks left on buildings and bodies are archives. And what attracted me immediately was one of the photographs that's in the exhibit. It's the young man, young Black man, and he's painting a mural.

**LW:** Oh, yes.

**JS:** And if you look at them quickly, you get one of those illusion effects where you don't know if his leg is the mural or not.

**LW:** You know what I love about that, it's hard to tell where he stops and the mural begins.

**JS:** Exactly. And I feel like it's, you know, metaphor or not, there are some actual, physical material aspects to it as well. But it seems to be also in your practice as well, kind of archival, it's gotten to the point now where it's shaping geographies. It's shaping the built environment in a really significant way. Reflection on these histories, collecting the stories and those archives of these very, you know, oral histories, storytelling, they're all ephemeral in nature. I was interested in hearing more about this relationship between storytelling, oral history, and what you think about archives in relationship to them. How

do you confront some of that material that is sparse and disconnected at times, but you bring them together into this new collective story? How do you see that in relationship to other archives that you've been with? How do you see that as a very different practice, if you feel that it's different, or do you feel it's doing some of the same things but with important divergences? I was curious about hearing more about that process. Also what are some of the first instinctual qualities, you mentioned a little about picking a subjective photograph? And, a very basic question, do you have a favorite archive that you've been to?

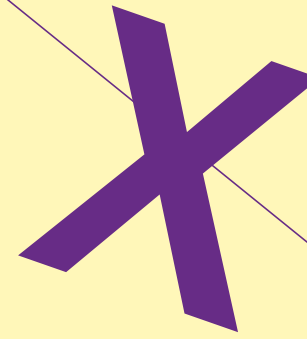
**LW:** Sean showed me a book last night that I think I'd heard of called On Photography. This guy who collected, on the internet, found images. And you know, he sort of grouped them by subject matter, sometimes. It was interesting that these were obviously anonymous pictures that he sourced up. That is of interest to me, and the reason I teach is with the chance to see what people come up with in terms of whatever they're trying to express, whether it's their life or what they think the world is like. And it's funny, I don't say I have to get up in the morning and say I have to keep improving the archive, I kind of just do it. And I think that's partly because I'm an artist. So basically, you know there's some people that fabricate reality, which is great, I mean it's like fiction and nonfiction. I guess, I'm more, I call it documentary, but I don't know because it's not complete yet, but I think I'm really interested in responding to the world. And photography allows me to go places I have no business, you know. I would say when I do that, I'm sort of catching something from that, and sometimes is specifically like writing on the wall, but it could be someone and their placement somewhere in a particular context, or maybe even a context that seems confusing and raising more questions. All that's really interesting to me because that's partly how people are in the world, it's not always

settled or easily explained. I take all of that and using this process to do that exploration, it manifests itself in certain ways. What I think is really interesting about this book is — even though it's both image, and she did a lot of oral histories — is that this was a way of making this history that disappeared, well, it disappeared for some people, but some people in the community are just thrilled. We hardly had anybody come because it really had been erased, so that's been really gratifying.

**I've always been interested in the marks left in the environment and on buildings, which are a kind of archive.**

**They sort of represent who's been there, who's marked it.**

# Shawna



**Christian Alvarado:** One of the things I believe is important to being an artist is finding a supportive community to belong to and I believe that multiplies exponentially for intersectional and marginalized folk. Can you tell us a little bit about your search for community? The things you look for? How you feel your work contributes to that community?

**Shawna X:** I feel that's the only reason why I haven't left the work to be honest. I think community is the most important aspect of my life. I actually feel that it doesn't contribute as much to my work as it does to myself and then that contributes to my work. I'm at a place where I don't want to be defined by the work I make. I think we're multitudes... We as humans are complex. A lot of the time we want to define ourselves by one thing that we're really passionate about. For me, I like to see myself as multifaceted beyond work and so my community fulfills me as a person deeper than sometimes my work does to be

honest. I think having people you can resonate with in terms of cultural experiences to even sensing... sensitive people, beyond their cultural backgrounds. All these different types of ways a person is and you and your energy and connection and alignment is just so essential for anyone. And then because I have that built I can instill some of that energy into my work.

**CA:** I can see that. I hope that this follow up question is the opposite of categorizing yourself. What are your favorite communities, or what are your favorite genres of things to pull from for inspiration? What experiences have you had in that realm of intersectionality?

**SX:** Yeah, I'm trying to think... what do I pull inspiration from?... I'm honestly tired.

[Laughter]

I like to pull inspiration from hard times.

I think actually for the most part I pull inspiration from complex shit in my life. In terms of connecting to people, I love the music scene in New York a lot. I haven't been able to indulge in it as much because I'm a mother now. There's such great comradery in the music scene, especially the underground rave scene. I just love that so much. People can come and everyone's extremely open. Everyone's just embracing music which is very deep but also not, it doesn't have to be that way. Obviously there's that aspect that I feel a lot of joy and freedom from. In terms of friends and people around me, Bed Stuy is a really nice neighborhood. I live in this family oriented neighborhood. We're all on WeChat. Everyone says hi to each other, I just love that soo much. Whereas Greenpoint and Williamsburg are very transient. So I enjoy... community to me is people you live amongst, it's not just people you connect to because you're an artist. It's beyond your labels, it's where you live and connected to the people in that.

**CA:** Exactly, you're tied back down to this planet after doing all of this art shit that has you constantly inside yourself.

**SX:** Exactly, and recently I started to go to the garden a lot. There's this community garden that's not far from where I live. The people there are so... they treat food as a way to connect, and that's obviously a very cultural thing. Seeing how they have garden dinners. The woman that runs the little garden, she'll pick random herbs and then people will bring little plates and then she'll be "What do you think about this with kimchi?" She literally made a blueberry kimchi yogurt dish that looks so random but just seeing that type of involvement with food and people and inviting people to come and having people over... that sort of connection has been really... It's a blessing to experience that.

**CA:** Yeah, and I feel that same energy that

you're talking about when I look at your work, comes from that emotional state of mind, but more of a connectedness than an emotional quality. It's like you're pulling from that environment but also pulling from yourself to fuse that together.

**SX:** I just really love that type of open space. I think that there's a lot of gate kept spaces. That it's very exclusive and I always felt confused by that. I mean, I understand that people like to feel special and so they create spaces where they present special, and that's kind of how it is. For the most part I resonate with people that are open and kind, you know? I want to resonate that with my work. If I connect people like that, that's automatically the type of work I'll be making.

**CA:** My next question has to do with that sort of collaboration. When I was looking into you, you have a huge breath of collaborations working with individuals but also larger entities. Lots of fancy clientele, lots of speaking engagements probably... I'm wondering... you already sort of answered this, the draw into that world is that connection, right?

**SX:** Yeah, I mean, how am I connected to those people?

**CA:** Yeah, how are you connected to these people? Do you feel when you scale things up to that larger scale you have that same blueberry kimchi recipe?

**SX:** No.

[Laughter]

That's honest. It depends on the client. When you're making work with larger entities it definitely becomes more of a transaction, more commodity than something that's as innocent as a kimchi blueberry yogurt recipe, you know what I mean? There's less play, at least in my experience, there's play in a re-

stricted way. With that said, that is how I have a livelihood. So I can't quite bite the hand that feeds me. I also feel the ability to navigate between those two worlds has been something that I think I wanted, now I'm kind of shifting a little bit. I think now I'm in a space where I'm like oh, what..., but for a long time I wanted that bridge. Maybe coming from, you know, first generation I don't have any wealth. That was one thing that concerned me, how do I have security for myself? So that obviously connects to the entity that is about creating a livelihood. I was also very drawn to the community that didn't really care about that. I wanted to have the ability to go between both and access different parts of me that responds to both of these worlds.

**CA:** Can I share an observation?

**SX:** Sure.

**CA:** You seem like the type of person to be able to do this. I don't want to say the influencer type of person but you have the sociable ability to be able to handle both the art and the business side of things. Did you feel like that was a learning process or did that sort of happen anyway?

**SX:** Yeah, I think it was a learning process because I think connection is always key. I think even in business. I don't want to say it as business vs. art. I think everything is relationship. Ultimately I always look for a relationship rather than anything less than that. Whether that's transaction, whether that's monetary, or if that's for credit, whatever, you know? I do think it's a learning curve to be able to navigate socially those types of relationships because you understand there's some people you have a different connection to and how much energy you put into that, and what type of energy you put into that.

**CA:** I see that, I feel that. We are about to run out of time so I'll hit you with two more ques-

tions. Your work has a very strong digital mark. Maybe that's influenced by the technical foundations you have in the art world or also the world that you find yourself surrounded in is collaborative space all the time. It's very collaborative, popular, informational. Are you a traditional artist using a digital language? Do you think of yourself in these terms? Where does that digital speak come from?

**SX:** I'm going to talk about that in my talk but it basically started because I didn't want to pay for the traditional material, it was getting too expensive for me. That is where it started. Now realizing it doesn't really matter... for me, of course execution matters, but personally, as long as I can visually execute what I'm trying to say. If it starts digitally it can go anywhere else. I'm not trying to purposefully create a digital mark, I'm just creating what is most comfortable to me.

**CA:** Cool, my last question for you is... Is there a question you wish people would ask you about your work?

**SX:** That's a hard question. I'm not sure, I think maybe ask me about the timelines a little bit more. I think my personal work, and also working with clients, comes from a very deep place. The theme on the surface level seems really obvious but there's always a deeper experience where it came from. So maybe ask me about, where did this moment come from? Where do you place this in your life?

**CA:** I'm not going to ask you about that right now, will save that for your talk, cool?

**SX:** Cool, cool, yeah.

**CA:** I think we're all set, thank you so much!

**SX:** Yeah, of course!

# AMY

# Yao

**Ellen O'Shea:** What is the first thing you do when you get to your studio?

**Amy Yao:** Well now that my studio is up from my house, it's maybe a bit too casual at this point but I usually like to organize my space, that sounds to be a little neurotic but...

**EO:** No, I get it, having a clean space to work in. So when you approach an idea do you have a clear vision in your head or is it more of an experimental process for you?

**AY:** I feel I work in several different modes. Sometimes I get ideas simply from driving long distances and images of whatever I want to do will pop in my head. That's one way of working. Other times I'll get very intense in terms of thinking about a group of ideas or what form it might take and through that pressure some kind of image crystallizes. More recently it's been the material or object,

whatever you want to say, that come out of research. By doing a lot of research and then thinking about the materials, more recently working with plants or dirt samples, thinking about what those materials can do and trying to formally exist in nature has been one way of figuring out how the object or material crystallizes in artwork. On top of that, I also shoot these videos. Making a video piece is a whole different kind of process. So it's kind of all over the place.

**EO:** So you do a lot of work with manipulating objects. Do you usually start with the real life object? Or are you working backwards some time where it's material you're going to make it out of to the real life object?

**AY:** Most of the time I have an image of what I want to make in my head and then I go about making that. I have to buy all of the ingredients and then create the object from those

materials. Definitely going around and seeing other objects. Whether it's really ancient objects in museums or man made objects influence how I think about making things.

**EO:** Awesome. So your work has a strong sense of push and pull and that kind of bait and switch to it. How do you balance that?

**AY:** What do you mean by bait and switch?

**EO:** For example, the eggs, the easter eggs, from far away they look like regular easter eggs but when you get up close they're kind of rotten plastic eggs.

**AY:** Yeah, with that body of work I was thinking specifically about repulsion and attraction. A lot of the work in that exhibition was meant to look kind of alluring from a distance but repulsive in person and up close. That was to sort of mimic the sensations I had from spending a lot of time in the poor area of Los Angeles. Because obviously seeing things from the window of your car is a distance to everything. It's an allure to those industrial shapes. Especially as an artist because a lot of times our studios are in industrial spaces. The reality of being in those spaces long term may be detrimental to your health or really horrible odor, pollution and all sorts of things. I was trying to collapse domestic space with industrial space imagery and also then thinking about things that are shiny and colorful to draw somebody in...

**EO:** Attract them...

**AY:** Yes, exactly. Things that cause the person, the viewer to become interested.

**EO:** In the doppelgangers piece which is a large pile of rice also filled with plastic pearls feels like a way to reckon with this horrific news story. Are there any current news stories you feel you are trying to reckon with?

**AY:** Yeah, so I'm still working with a lot of the same ideas from that show but approaching them in a different way. That piece came out of my experience of renting a studio in this part of Los Angeles called Commerce where there was lead contamination that spread throughout different neighborhoods like Boyle Heights, Maywood, Vernon. My studio actually happened to be across the train tracks at the center of the contamination. That was the impetus for making that show. To think about the distance between where we get our goods from, the manufacturing process and how that also creates a psychological distance and also how popular news or televisions focuses on a lot of things that happen abroad when there's a lot of issues locally that need to be addressed and are ignored. Right now I'm also working on dirt samples from these industrial impacted areas. Collecting dirt samples from elementary schools and places like that, that might have contamination. Making artwork using that contaminated soil.

**EO:** I'm going to choose one more question. This may be a silly question but how has being a member of the all Asian American Teenage Riot Girl band Emily's Sassy Lime influenced your art career?

**AY:** You'll see in the lecture but it has impacted me deeply, you know? I think that being part of that time period, that movement and then also having our own identities as Asian American young girls, you know it's like... That identity was even special within Riot Girl. You know Riot Girl did have some diversity in places like LA, but I feel it was the first time in my life where I produced things and put myself out there, and you know, it's kind of a scary thing to do. It's not easy, especially when you're a teenager. You're on stage and singing songs, your lyrics are lame...

[Laughter]

...but you're still out there doing it. It teaches you to have a certain kind of bravery to address things that you care about and kind of a fearlessness to it. I guess I would say that the whole indie movement from that time period, punk and indie, whatever you want to call it, garage rock movement also really taught me how to create space... or the importance of creating space for the things that you care about, where the space doesn't exist before. You know, It could be anything, it could be about... these days there's so many identity issues and these kinds of things that are floating about and there aren't necessarily spaces for these things that people care about in the art world. You can't really rely on museums to get it right because a lot of the time those people are pretty divorced from... I know some people and they work for museums and they're great people but there's a certain structure that causes a lot of editing within that institutional structure. At the museum you have a board, all these people that are interjecting... no we don't want this, we want more of this... So you know, the curator's hands are tied to all of that. Where in a young persons project space they can rent to the landlord, whatever... or even some people do stuff in their car or in nature and they can do what they want.

**EO:** There's more freedom to it.

**AY:** So you can be more aggressively strong with your messaging or whatever it is. I think that's important to set in a space. I think that stays, being carved out during that time, which I think is interesting.

**The importance of creating space for the things that exist before, where the space doesn't exist before, where the space doesn't exist before, where the space doesn't exist before.**

# SUN

# YOU

**Will Zeng:** Thinking about your work and looking at the ways that the installations and sculptures are put together, it's a mix of play but also specificity. Obviously, the things that you are using in your projects and works have a deep sense of control. I was wondering how you balance those two things of play and spontaneity but also specificity.

**Sun You:** Thank you for inviting me. And just wanted to say I have never done five minute interviews so I'll try to make it as short as possible. But on that note, those two are very important and I'm hoping that it is a representation of who I am and of a personal temperament and what I value in life. I'm able to have those two and I'm very glad you actually see those in my work. I work with polymer clay, which is basically an oven baked clay, and small objects held together with magnets. So relatively speaking all my materials are very inexpensive, so stakes are low. That's

a really good beginning. There's no pressure. I think that at the beginning I also make them without judging them so there's lots of intuitive playfulness that is often a collection of gestures. And then that becomes much more specific and has more decisiveness later, towards what kind of show I'm having, what kind of space I have. So lots of the control and specificity of my work comes related to exhibition space and the architecture details of that space.

**WZ:** Thank you for that. It sounds like there's a collaboration or response to not only what's in your studio but what's happening in the space that you are showing and interacting with. Do you imagine your practice in terms of an art historical tradition?

**SY:** No, haha, I don't. I think that can be good in that I've had pretty uninteresting studio visits with curators because of that reason.



Especially if they have an art history background, they have a hard time placing me or having me in the context of art history. But the good thing is because I don't have an obvious image of art history or tradition, I got to be invited to many different shows with different artists. Some are more obvious to pair up with like Polly Apfelbaum, which I think obviously yes there is common interest. But tomorrow I have a show in Texas where I am showing with Walter Price - which in my mind - he is a great artist but there is not an obvious common interest or obvious common similarity in artwork which can be a good thing.

**WZ:** Maybe this is related in an off kilter way, but can you describe an art experience that was really powerful or meaningful for you?

**SY:** Meaningful, I don't know. But there are ones that definitely meant something to me. I arrived in New York and relatively early on there was deKooning's retrospective in Moma in 2011. And this show was very well received, everyone was raving about it, everybody was saying you have to go see it, it's a great show. So I went and saw the show. And I sort of got this confirmation that I'm right. That yes, he's a great painter but I think he has an issue and doesn't know how to deal with colors. So I walked out thinking that like "Yeah, I think there are moments sometimes where you need to trust what you see and what you experience and not what other people are saying."

**WZ:** So it felt like part of that was how it landed on you, not necessarily the work itself. But its relationship to you and finding the confidence in yourself to be like "Hey, these corners don't respond the way that they should."

**SY:** Sometimes I have to go to a good work or that artist has to come to me. But in some way I was born and raised in a culture where we were taught to respect authority a lot. And

then going to school in Detroit, Michigan and being in New York, where nothing matters what you did before New York. There's this kind of hierarchy and sort of urgency where I wanted to really learn a lot about arts in New York and what I know and what I believe. So at the beginning, especially, there is this conflict of should I trust my instinct versus what other people are saying. There's a certain taste of the hierarchy that I was fighting.

**WZ:** Right and it has to hit you at the right time, at a moment where you are forming your own ideas about art and tastes and the things you are seeing.

**SY:** Yeah, and they are constantly changing. There are hard drops that I loved in grad school that I was like "What? I really liked that artist?" So it's evolving.

**WZ:** I wanted to learn more about An/Other New York, a collective of Asian and Asian American artists, writers, curators that you co-founded. How did it get started and what kind of conversation are you able to have in that context that you might not be able to have in other spaces? And also I just love the title and the punning.

**SY:** So I am actually a part of a lot of collectives. I co-run a non-profit gallery called Tiger Strike Asteroid. An/Other New York came out of a, seven or eight years ago, this group of friends actually. We would regularly get together over dinner and initially started out as a kind of group therapy thing. We were kind of complaining and sharing a lot about overbearing parents that we had, or how dysfunctional our families are, and immigrant families, and having to navigate two different cultures or two different generations. And getting into how we just don't see that many Asian or Asian American shows anymore. Me - I'm personally lucky to have shows and work with commercial galleries and have representation. But I'm also very aware that

I am the only one in my gallery, I'm the only person who is Asian or Asian American in the roster of the gallery. So the fact that a lot of prestigious or well known and private art schools in New York, that some of their schools have more than 50% Asian or Asian Americans and in grad programs it's 10-15% and yet I just don't see that in the market. And it is changing and getting better. So it started out as therapy and complaining, and then sort of decided why don't we just put all this frustration and anger in more productive ways? So we created a group, and then created an exhibition.

**WZ:** I love that very organic, grassroots, just people coming together and complaining is a very relatable experience. And taking the next step to turn that into something bigger like a collective action. It feels really powerful.

**SY:** Yeah and by no means do we have a single vision. We are also very diverse within the group. You know, I'm Korean and the Chinese, Korean, Japanese, East Asian experiences are different from South East Asian experiences, not to mention Indian American or Pakistani American experiences. So we're a very loose group and we don't really have one overarching theme or idea or mission. So whatever one person's mission is, we help each other execute that.



# Artist

# Bios

**Amy Brener**

Amy Brener was born in Victoria, BC, and moved to New York City in 2007. Since graduating with an MFA from Hunter College in 2010, her sculptures have been exhibited at galleries and institutions across the US, Canada, Europe and China. Highlights include MoMA PS1 and Socrates Sculpture Park in New York, the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Galerie Pact in Paris, Wentrup Gallery in Berlin and Riverside Art Museum in Beijing. Her work has been featured in publications such as The New York Times, Art in America, CURA, Artnet News and The Brooklyn Rail. She is represented by Jack Barrett Gallery in New York, where she will present a solo exhibition in the fall of 2021.

**Dianna Frid**

Dianna Frid is an artist working at the intersection of material texts and textiles. Her artist's books and mixed-media works make visible the tactile manifestations of language. In her work, embroidery is a prominent vehicle for exploring the relationships between writing and drawing, and the overlaps of transcription, translation, and legibility. Frid was born in Mexico where she was first exposed to textiles as complex

codes of material writing. This point of reference helps her situate her work alongside lineages that embrace art and needlework without pitting them in hierarchical opposition. Time, Rhythm, Process, and Matter are never in opposition. English is Dianna Frid's stepmother tongue. She does not check boxes. Frid is Director of Graduate Studies and Professor at University of Illinois at Chicago, Art Department.

### **Catherine Haggarty**

Catherine Haggarty is an artist based in Brooklyn, New York. Haggarty's paintings and curatorial work have been reviewed by and featured in Bomb Magazine, Hyperallergic, Artnet, Two Coats of Paint, Brooklyn Magazine, The New York Times, Maake Magazine, Art Maze Magazine, The Observer, Art Spiel and Sound and Vision Podcast. Solo exhibitions include Massey Klein Gallery, This Friday Next Friday, Bloomsburg University, One River School of Art and Design, Proto Gallery, and Look and Listen in Marseille France. Catherine has been a visiting artist & lecturer at Boston University MFA, Hunter MFA, Denison University, Purchase MFA, Brooklyn College MFA, and in 2018 she was the Anderson Endowed Lecturer at Penn State University. Haggarty earned her M.F.A from Mason Gross, Rutgers University in 2011. Currently, Haggarty is an adjunct professor at The School of Visual Arts (SVA) and also co-founded and co-directs the NYC Crit Club.

### **Yuji Hiratsuka**

Yuji Hiratsuka was born in Osaka, Japan, and received a bachelor's degree in art education from Tokyo Teachers' University in 1978. He taught art at several high schools and junior high schools in Osaka until he moved to the United States in 1985 to pursue graduate degrees in printmaking at New Mexico State University and Indiana University. He taught printmaking, book arts and drawing at Oregon State University for the past three decades. His intaglio prints are in public collections including the British Museum, London, UK; State Museum of Oriental Arts, Moscow, Russia; Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR; Freer/Sackler, The Smithsonian's Museum of Asian Art, Washington, D.C.; The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Boston, MA; Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; University of Oregon, Eugene, OR; de Young Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, CA.

### **Andrew Thomas Huang**

Filmmaker and artist Andrew Thomas Huang crafts hybrid fantasy worlds and mythical dreamscapes. A Grammy-

nominated music video director, Huang's collaborators include Bjork, FKA Twigs and Thom Yorke among others. Serving as creative director for Bjork's VR exhibition Bjork Digital, Huang created multiple immersive experiences for the pioneering traveling installation. His films have been commissioned by and exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, NY, The Sydney Opera House and the Museum of Contemporary Art, LA. Inspired by his Chinese heritage and queer Asian mythology and folklore, Huang continues his foray into narrative with his first feature film TIGER GIRL which has received support from Film Independent and the Sundance Institute. Huang graduated with a degree in Fine Art and Animation from the University of Southern California.

### **Lezley Saar**

Lezley Saar is a mixed media artist currently living in Los Angeles. While majoring in communications at San Francisco State University, she worked at KPFA radio in Berkeley as part of a collective; The Souls of Black Folk. There she started illustrating for her writer friends. In the 80s, she began making altered books. Her works now include paintings, drawings, altered books, banners, collages, dioramas, and installations. Saar's various recent series; Anomalies, Mulatto Nation, Tooth Hut, Autist's Fables, Madwoman in the Attic, Monad, Gender Renaissance, A Conjuring of Conjurers, and Black Garden deal with notions of race, gender, beauty, normalcy, escapism and sanity. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, and is in museum collections such as The Kemper Museum, CAAM, MOCA Los Angeles, LACMA, The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Ackland Art Museum, The Crocker Art Museum, The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, The Schnitzer Museum, Oregon, and The Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

### **Michael Sherwin**

Michael Sherwin is a multimedia artist exploring scientific, cultural, and historical interpretations of the natural world. He has won numerous grants and awards for his work and has exhibited widely, including recent exhibitions at the Atlanta Contemporary Arts Center, Morris Museum of Art, Huntington Museum of Art, and the Center for Fine Art Photography among others. Reviews and features of his work have been published on numerous outlets, including The Washington Post, BuzzFeed News, Lenscratch and on National Public Radio. He has also lectured extensively about his work at universities and conferences across the nation. Sherwin earned an MFA from the University of Oregon in 2004, and a BFA from The Ohio State University



in 1999. Currently, he is an Associate Professor of Art in the School of Art and Design at West Virginia University.

### **Lumi Tan**

Lumi Tan is Senior Curator at The Kitchen in New York, where she has organized exhibitions and produced performances with artists across disciplines and generations since 2010. Most recently, Tan has worked with Kevin Beasley, Baseera Khan, Autumn Knight, and Kenneth Tam. Previously she curated projects with artists including Gretchen Bender, Meriem Bennani, Liz Magic Laser, The Racial Imaginary Institute, Sahra Motalebi, Sondra Perry, Tina Satter/Half Straddle, Anicka Yi, and Danh Vo and Xiu Xiu. Prior to The Kitchen, Tan was Guest Curator at the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain Nord Pas-de-Calais in France, director at Zach Feuer Gallery, and curatorial assistant at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center. Her writing has appeared in The New York Times, Artforum, Frieze, Mousse, Cura, and numerous exhibition catalogues. She was the recipient of 2020 VIA Art Fund Curatorial Fellowship.

### **Pei-Hsuan Wang**

Utilizing media spanning video, sculpture, drawing, and installation, Pei-Hsuan Wang's practice inquiries into personal insecurities navigating between the East and the West, two cultural and geographical delineations that have shaped her upbringing. Drawing from trauma, memory, family history, and aspirations, Wang's work mines the vulnerabilities, contradictions, and beauty that reside in identity formation as an Asian woman in diaspora. Pei-Hsuan Wang holds a BA from Macalester College, MN and an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, MI, USA. She was resident at ISCP, New York (2018), Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, Korea (2018), and guest resident at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2019). Wang is the winner of Special Jury Price of the 2019 Huayu Youth Award in China and is currently a candidate laureate at the Higher Institute of Art (HISK) in Ghent, Belgium.

### **Lewis Watts**

Lewis Watts is a photographer, archivist, curator, and Professor Emeritus of Art at UC Santa Cruz. His research and artwork centers around the "cultural landscape" primarily in communities in the African Diaspora in different parts of the world. He is the co-author of "Harlem of the West: The San Francisco Fillmore Jazz Era" Heyday Books Berkeley 2020, "New Orleans Suite: Music and Culture in Transition" UC

Press 2013 and "Portraits" EditionOne Press Berkeley 2020. His work has been exhibited at and/or is in the collections of The Zimmerli Museum, Rutgers University, Staatliche Kunstmuseum, Dresden Germany, Autograph London, The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, The Oakland Museum of California, The Amistad Center for Art and Culture, Hartford, Conn, and The McEvoy Foundation, San Francisco among others. He is affiliated with the Rena Bransten Gallery San Francisco.

### **Shawna X**

Shawna X (BFA '09, Digital Arts) is a visual artist based in New York City, known for her vibrant and graphical image-making. Her works are manifestations in the discovery of her personal journey, cultural identity, motherhood, and rekindling connection between mind and body. Currently, she is exploring the synchronicity between visceral and emotional explorations via traditional and AI expressions.

### **Amy Yao**

Amy Yao is a contemporary visual artist making work in many different mediums informed by ideas of waste, consumption, and identity. She is represented by Various Small Fires in Los Angeles and 47 Canal in New York City. Yao is a lecturer in visual arts at Princeton University, NJ.

### **Sun You**

Sun You is a Seoul born, New York based artist. You has exhibited her work in galleries and museums internationally. Recent exhibition venues include Geary, New York, NY, Mrs. Queens, NY, The Pit, Glendale, CA, Step Sister, New York, The Anderson Gallery, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, Queens Museum, New York, The Korean Cultural Center, New York, Scotty Enterprises, Berlin, Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral, Bad Ems, Seoul Arts Center, Seoul, SARDINE, New York and The Suburban, Chicago. You was an artist in residence at The Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, Marble House Project, Atlantic Center for the Arts, Triangle Arts Association, and Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral in Bad Ems, Germany. She was also selected as Artists to Watch in 2016 by WIDEWALLS and 18 Artists to Watch, by Modern Painters, 2015. You is currently teaching as a visiting professor at the University of Oregon 2021-2022.



# Colorport

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University of Oregon  
Department of Art

Interviews with Artists  
by MFA Candidates

**Amy Brener**

**Dianna Frid**

**Catherine Haggarty**

**Yuji Hiratsuka**

**Andrew Thomas Huang**

**Lezley Saar**

**Michael Sherwin**

**Lumi Tan**

**Pei-Hsuan Wang**

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