

JULY 6 – AUGUST 12, 2023

THE 2023 SHIFT RESIDENCY EXHIBITION

# The World Is Before You

**efa** Project Space Program

MAYA JEFFEREIS  
DARIO MOHR  
WILLA GOETTLING

FRANCISCO ECHO ERASO  
GABRIELLE ONDINE MERTZ  
CARRIE SIJIA WANG





# The World Is Before You

2023 SHFT Residency Exhibition

July 06 - August 12, 2023

Francisco echo Enso • Wilo Goetting • Moya Jefferson •  
Gabrielle Ondine Merré • Doris Mohr • Carrie Sipa Wang

## SHFT, A RESIDENCY FOR ARTS WORKERS

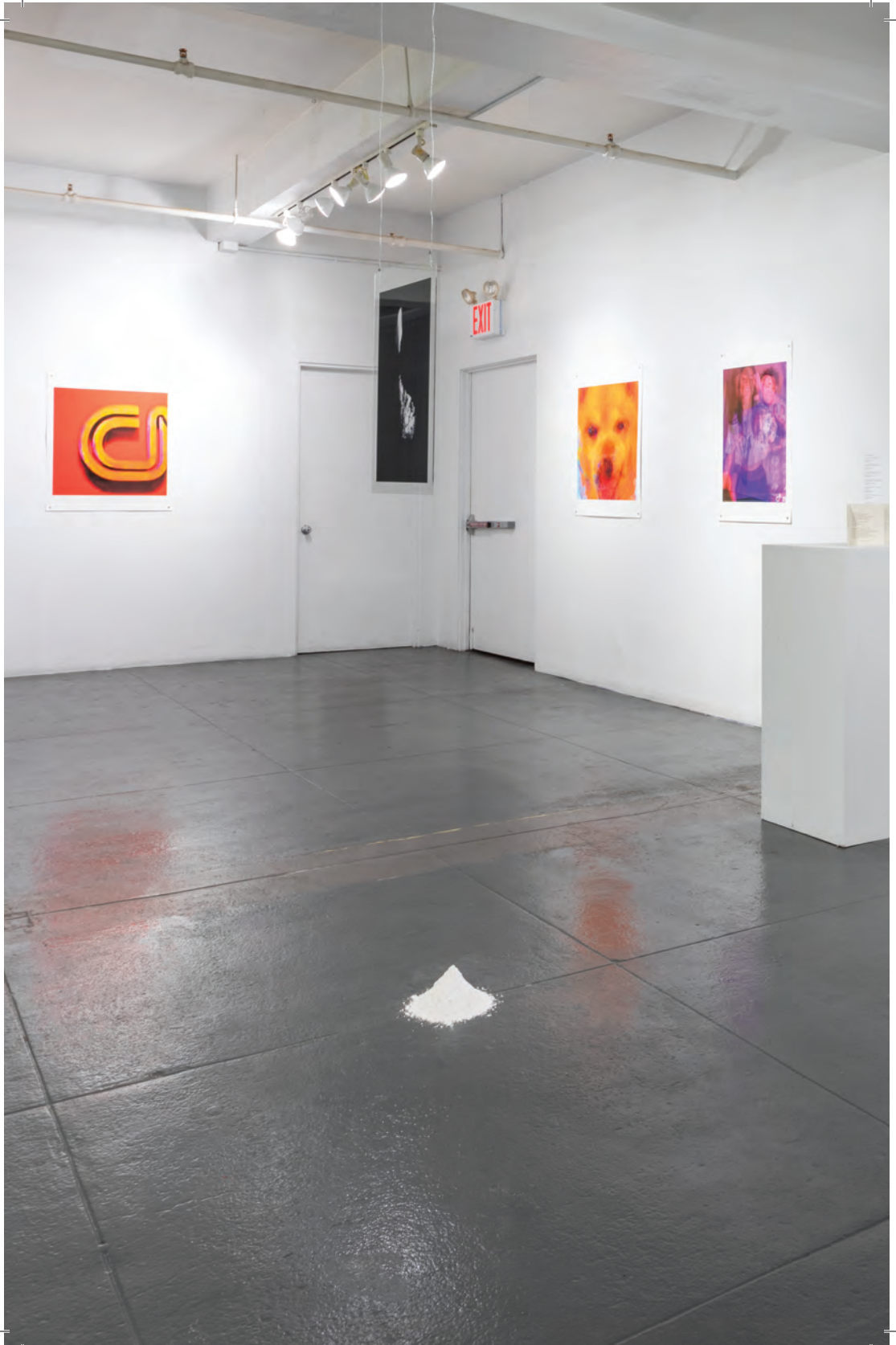
Since its inception in 2005, SHFT residency has been providing peer support, mentoring, and studio space for over eighty artists who work in arts organizations to foster their personal creative practices. The SHFT residency honors these artists' commitment to the arts community with a supportive environment.

Curator: Naomi Lev  
Assistant Curator: Ming Lee















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*SHIFT 2023 Residency Exhibition*

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# About SHIFT: A Residency for Arts Workers

Since its inception in 2010, SHIFT residency has been providing peer support, mentoring, and studio space for over eighty artists who work in arts organizations in New York (as administrators, educators, accessibility consultants, etc.) to advance their personal creative practices. SHIFT recognizes the contribution of arts workers to the art community, and for whom their livelihood is a passion and responsibility, demanding patience, attentiveness, and creativity. The SHIFT residency honors these artists' commitment to the arts community with a supportive and collaborative environment.

SHIFT has hosted artists working in a range of media, from sound and installation to painting, performance, and social practice. In addition to its role as a support network, SHIFT promotes advocacy for arts workers and seeks to increase equity and representation within the field.

To date, SHIFT has welcomed arts workers as residents from the following institutions: Abrons Art Center, Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant Program, Artists Alliance Inc.,

Bronx River Arts Center, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Children's Museum of Manhattan, CUE Art Foundation, Czech Center New York, Elastic City, Eyebeam Center for Art + Technology, Flux Factory, FreeDimensional, Henry Street Settlement, International Center for Photography, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Metropolitan Opera, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Joan Mitchell Foundation, Museum of Arts & Design (MAD), Museum of the City of New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), Smack Mellon, Queens Museum, Reanimation Library, Residency Unlimited, Time Out New York, School of Visual Arts, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Triangle Art Association, Vera List Center for Art + Politics at The New School, Whitney Museum, and Wave Hill, among many others.

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## SHIFT Curatorial Mentorship

The SHIFT Curatorial Mentorship is a new program established by EFA Project Space and launched in January 2023.

The main purpose of the Mentorship is to prepare an emerging curator to the practicalities of working alongside professional artists and supporting them through research, administration, and production towards the final product and exhibition space. The program begins with welcoming the artists into their shared studio at The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, and ends with the mentee as Assistant Curator of the exhibition at EFA Project Space. The mentee works closely with EFA staff and with the exhibition curator throughout the mentorship to experience firsthand working collaboratively in a professional non-profit setting, and establishing a thesis and text for the exhibition.

# The World Is Before You

by NAOMI LEV, CURATOR  
DIRECTOR AND CHIEF CURATOR,  
EFA PROJECT SPACE PROGRAM

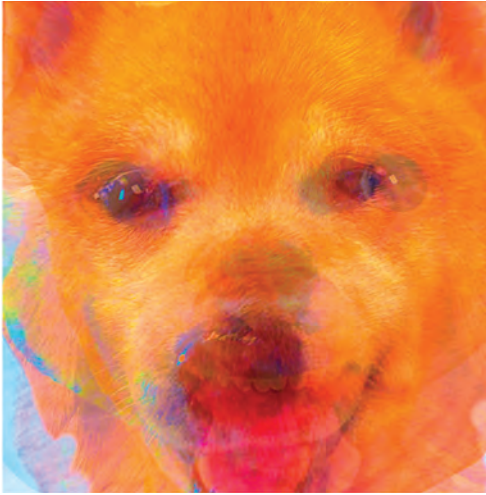
For a 2004 conference about art and labor, artists and educators Jessica Stockholder and Joe Scanlan wrote:

*The act of making mediates between our inside and the outside, for each of us and for society as a whole. That we make things is driven by biology and necessity; like breathing and socializing it is part of being human. Each one of us grows into the history and culture of making that we are born into; our making is always transforming that culture even as it is determined by it.<sup>1</sup>*

Now, in its thirteenth year, *SHIFT: A Residency for Arts Workers* remains a unique program in the art world. This residency enables artists that also work in the arts to pursue and advance

1 Jessica Stockholder and Joe Scanlan, "Art and Labor", Collaboration with Joe Scanlan & Jessica Stockholder. Introduction to a panel discussion at Yale University School of Art, September 2004. <https://jessicastockholder.info/projects/writing/art-and-labor/>.





**Gabrielle Ondine Mertz**

*I'm Only On Here For The Dogs,*  
*Instagram, First Beta Test Post,*  
*October 6 2010–Present, 2023*  
Pigment painting on paper  
36 x 31 inches

their creative practices. Each year, the SHIFT residency provides the resident artists with a space to create, to speak with each other, to collaborate and learn, ponder and focus, and continue to

develop meaningful works. Considering art and labor, as well as the labor of art, this residency opportunity is a way to embrace the two worlds, whether through questioning their existence, allowing them to coincide, or getting close to oneself and realizing what matters most.

Since January of 2023, SHIFT residency artists: Francisco echo Eraso, Willa Goetting, Maya Jeffereis, Gabrielle Ondine Mertz, Dario Mohr, and Carrie Sijia Wang, have been activating their shared studio at The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, meeting with arts professionals, and working on their projects towards the final exhibition.

While coordinating the SHIFT residency this year, I've had the opportunity of working closely with the artists from start to finish — through their processes and meetings, discovering what they are interested in, what they are concerned about, and how they want to carve their future. As a curator, working closely with the artists towards the exhibition has been a unique experience in which we all learned how to listen to each other, slow down, contemplate, and deepen into

**Willa Goettling**

*the temperature of dissociation /  
the process of dissolution, 2023*

35mm photograph printed on  
adhesive window cling, plexi glass,  
calcium carbonate, hardware  
14 x 21 inches



experimental processes that have led every single one of the residents to realize new projects and possibilities. We also had the opportunity to work closely with Minji Lee, the first SHIFT Curatorial Mentee, who supported the artists with administration and coordination, and was Assistant Curator of the final

exhibition. The opportunity of inviting an emerging curator into the SHIFT program was special in its own way, allowing further connections and collaborations into this space.

The end result of the resident artists' personal and collective quests are artworks that capture stories of exploration, dedication, and labor, and that reflect on the history of our nation and reveal a magnitude of cultures and circumstances. In *Nobody Knows My Name*, James Baldwin writes: "The world is before you and you need not take it or leave it as it was when you came in."<sup>2</sup> Throughout the residency, the 2023 SHIFT cohort artists have presented their consistent strive to examine, understand, and share a unique view of their heritage, roots,

2 James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name* (New York: Dial Press, 1961), "In Search of a Majority: An Address", 221.

and influences. This final presentation is therefore an accumulation of their whole being; their being as artists, as arts workers, and as active citizens of this world. The voices in the final exhibition are poetic and clear, voices that are heard so vividly and strongly, and that echo their passion as well as their pain. Their consideration, delicacy, and empathy while dealing with what their bodies remember is prominent, filling EFA Project Space with an abundance of intricate stories, realizations, beauty, and hope.

On behalf of EFA Project Space I would like to express immense gratitude to Project Space's new and excellent staff, including Charlie Fischetti, Gallery Assistant, and Agustina Markez, Gallery Manager, who have been smart in decision making, problem solving, and supporting the artists, curators, and the exhibition process at-large. We also thank Mila Wong, a LeRoy Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation Summer Intern, who has been curious, creative, and hard-working throughout the exhibition-making process. I would like to mention and thank Minji Lee, EFA Project Space's 2023 SHIFT Curatorial Mentee, for her learning abilities, patience, and support throughout the residency and into the exhibition space, and for providing a strong essay for the catalog as Assistant Curator of the exhibition *The World Is Before You*. We also thank Re'al Christian who has contributed an intricate and fascinating essay, and to all the visiting professionals and workshop facilitators that have joined SHIFT this year, as well as the fantastic jurors that helped us bring together this great cohort. Big thank you to Tirza Ben-Porat who designed this beautiful catalog with patience and precision. And a great deal of appreciation to EFA Executive Director, Jane Stephenson, and to Deputy Director HC Huynh for encouraging and giving great advice. Furthermore, we thank EFA Business Manager, Dathon Pilgrim, EFA Superintendent Alex Credle, EFA Porter Rob Golding, and the entire EFA front desk

staff. A shout out to EFA Studio Program staff with whom we appreciate the collaboration within the EFA studio space, and to The Robert Blackburn Print Workshop staff who have enabled SHIFT residents to work and activate their facilities during the residency. Finally, thank you to the 2023 SHIFT residents and to the SHIFT alumni community at-large for your continuous creativity and support. We look forward to many more productive and enriching collaborations with and within these communities.

**Francisco echo Eraso**

*Flor de cuatro pétalos, 2023*

Dyed linen yarn, floor loom, Open

Audio Description, Ongoing  
performance

Dimensions variable





Keeping track of the  
slow process,  
    Temporalities of crip time,  
    Borrowed time.

Quipus coded with  
accounting formulas,  
    divisions along the axes of  
    grief time  
    work time  
    rest time  
    time to weave.

# The World We Dance

by MINJI LEE, ASSISTANT CURATOR

Showcasing the latest works of six *SHIFT* residency artists—Francisco echo Eraso, Willa Goettling, Maya Jeffereis, Gabrielle Ondine Mertz, Dario Mohr, and Carrie Sijia Wang—*The World Is Before You* features artworks that actively challenge concealed power structures, amplify marginalized voices and narratives, and explore the journey of self-discovery. The title of this essay encapsulates the profound ways in which each artist employs diverse mediums and techniques, from textiles and printmaking to photographs and interactive installations, crafting introspective experiences that evoke a sense of empathy and resilience. As a powerful platform for reflection, the exhibition invites viewers to engage in contemplation, introspection, and a deeper understanding of the diverse narratives that shape our collective human experience.

Interdisciplinary artist Francisco echo Eraso makes work deeply rooted in principles of disability justice, trans liberation, cooperative textiles, and the creative redistribution of resources. His exploration of these themes is evident in his installation *Flor de cuatro pétalos* (2023), in which he presents a captivating process of

creating a large-scale, double-woven textile. At the heart of the gallery, Eraso situates an eight-harness floor loom, the focal point of the installation. Accompanying the loom is a directional speaker, which provides open Audio Description (AD) of the installation. The auditory component enunciates the tactile and visual components of Eraso's work as well as the rich histories embedded within the textile, providing a deeper understanding of its cultural and sociopolitical significance. Eraso's deliberate choice of materials, such as the loom and linen, and his meticulous visual composition resonate with his Andean roots and family legacy. In particular, the repetition of the red cross symbol and the red and yellow color combination contain personal cultural meaning for the artist, reflecting his Colombian-American identity and family history; his grandparents were devoted to Red Cross in Southern Colombia. For Eraso, the cross also evokes pressing social issues, such as the lack of access to healthcare in the United States and the enduring effects of colonialism within the medical-industrial complex, in particular for trans, disabled, poor, and racialized people. Drawing upon personal experiences, Eraso infuses his process of weaving with a poignant sense of grief resulting from the loss of loved ones during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, exemplified by the tray of herbs as an altar on top of the loom. His decision to share his labor instead of exhibiting a finished artwork invites the audience to engage in the performative elements of his practice, becoming active participants rather than passive spectators.

Maya Jeffereis works in video, performance, and installation to investigate the ways suppressed histories complicate and haunt notions of identity, memory, and origin. By utilizing counter-narratives and personal memories, Jeffereis aims to fill the gaps between written and forgotten history. In her two videos, *Fields Fallen from Distant Songs* (2023) and *Passages I* (2023), Jeffereis delves into her Japanese ancestral history, exploring the experiences of Japanese immigrants who worked in Hawai'iian sugarcane plantations between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Arriving in

**Maya Jeffereis**

*Passages I*, 2023

Single-channel 4K video, 16mm film  
(color, silent), sugar glass screen  
05:00 minutes, looped



Hawai'i with aspirations of a better life, these immigrants faced the reality where the contract sugar plantation workers were subjected to backbreaking labor and poor living conditions. In *Fields Fallen from Distant Songs*, she interweaves

various sound and visual elements, scattered across the expanse of a century, to create a compelling narrative. "Hole Hole Bushi," sung by Japanese immigrants while toiling on Hawai'i's sugar plantations particularly holds deep significance. The term *hole hole* refers to the Hawai'ian word for dried sugar cane leaves, with *bushi* (節) referring to the Japanese word for melody.<sup>1</sup> These folk songs, which often recounted homeland reminiscences as well as the struggles of plantation life, provided solace to Japanese workers, easing their homesickness and fostering mutual support amidst their struggles.<sup>2</sup> Here, Jeffereis creates a musical medley of folk music, contemporary experimental electronic music, and percussion, enhancing the emotional impact of the work. Her integration of different visual components is also prominent, combining video footage culled from Thomas Edison's 1906 film *The Hawaiian Islands* with footage captured by her grandfather during the 1960s in Hawai'i, as well as her recent research trip to

1 "Hole Hole Bushi," University of Hawai'i. June 11, 2023, [hawaii.edu/uhwo/clear/home/HoleBushi.html](http://hawaii.edu/uhwo/clear/home/HoleBushi.html).

2 "The Canefield Songs Project," University of Hawai'i. June 11, 2023, [hawaii.edu/uhwo/clear/Hole\\_Hole\\_Bushi/](http://hawaii.edu/uhwo/clear/Hole_Hole_Bushi/).



the region. The amalgamation of these sources transcend time and weave an intricate narrative. Situated nearby is *Passages I*, a video installation with a translucent screen made from crystalized sugar, where Jeffereis developed film using the chemigram<sup>3</sup> process to intervene onto family and archival documents. By projecting images onto the suspended sugar screen, *Passages I* displays ripples of light through the screen, almost like lightning making its way through dark storm clouds, evoking the hidden aspects of the history of Japanese people in Hawai'i, which to this day is not fully understood in popular American culture.

Willa Goettling's artistic practice revolves around the creation and dissemination of printed matter, employing art as a means for information sharing, research, and community building. In her installation *a geology breaks in half to grow* (2023), Goettling showcases an assemblage that combines various elements, including a digital photograph, three engraved limestones, and an art book featuring a poem authored by the artist. Central to Goettling's installation is the limestone, which serves as a metaphorical anchor for her personal narratives, especially her connection to her family's history of manual labor. Notably, Goettling's father, a stonemason, frequently utilizes limestone in his craft. Limestone possesses an abundance, ubiquity, and versatility that make it an essential element in numerous industries. Moreover, through a transformative process known as dissociation, limestone can be converted into individual materials such as concrete, glass, and paper. The notion of dissociation serves as a source of inspiration for Goettling, as it allows her to acknowledge and reconcile the influence of her family's legacy while exploring her identity, and navigating her own path. In her poem, printed in the accordion artist's book, Goettling eloquently writes, "...*they grow and form in regions where currents are strong, forceful / needing to keep moving in order to keep growing...*", drawing a parallel between

3 A method of imprinting positive or negative images directly onto light-sensitive paper using various objects.

the geological growth of limestone and the continuous evolution of her lineage. Weaving together threads of geological investigation, self-discovery, and discourses on working-class labor, Goettling ponders how the relationship to that labor can be inherited and interpreted through generations.

In *Trophies of War: Kingdom of Light* (2023), Dario Mohr delves into cultural symbolism by incorporating found objects into a series of meticulously crafted trophies. By utilizing these objects, Mohr reflects on the historical origins associated with trophies. The concept of a trophy, originally derived from the ancient Greek term *tropaion* (τρόπαιον), holds a significant place in human history. Serving as a tangible representation of achievement, a trophy stands as a monument that proudly showcases one's accomplishments. The earliest recorded account of the *tropaion*, as documented by Herodotus around 550 BC, recounts a tale of a severely wounded warrior who, despite his injuries, collected weapons from the fallen enemy to claim victory for his party.<sup>4</sup> Triumphant warriors would gather a selection of armaments from their adversaries, such as a helmet, shield, spear, and greaves, to construct the *tropaion*—a sign of their victory.<sup>5</sup> As a first-generation Grenadian American residing in the United States, Mohr's personal experiences and ancestral heritage greatly inform his artistic explorations. Contemplating his multiple identities, which encompass his Caribbean and African roots, Mohr approaches his surroundings with a critical distance, specifically scrutinizing the concept of American Exceptionalism, an integral notion in shaping the United States of today that tends to overlook the nation's colonial past. Through his artistic process, Mohr peels back the layers of obscured roots, unearthing the hidden significance behind the trophy and providing a bold examination, or perhaps

4 Jutta Stroszeck, "Greek trophy monuments," *The Norwegian Institute at Athens*, 2004, 309.

5 *Ibid*, 310.

deconstruction, of the authority these objects confer. In this way, he not only pays homage to his African ancestors but also acknowledges the BIPOC communities in the United States. His work invites viewers to reflect on the complexities of cultural identity, the weight of historical legacies, and the potential for transformative dialogue that emerges from reexamining established symbols and narratives.

Creating work that combines visual art, technology, and participatory experiences to explore the complex relationship between humans and machines, Carrie Sijia Wang is inspired by the bureaucratic processes and standardization prevalent in the artificial intelligence industry. Wang employs a unique blend of humor and discomfort to provoke thoughtful engagement with her artwork. In her interactive installation *Hey Alien* (2023), the audience is invited to step into the shoes of extraterrestrials who are seeking to immigrate to the “Beautiful Planet” after their home, Earth, has become uninhabitable. This immersive experience plunges participants into a fictional situation, in which they have to take a mandatory test that determines their eligibility for settlement in the Beautiful Planet. Throughout the process, the aliens are subjected to interrogation, facing questions such as “Where are you from?”, “Why are you here?” and “Why should I let you stay?”. Additionally, they are

required to recite the propagandist statement, “The Beautiful Planet where the extraordinary becomes ordinary.” Wang’s conceptualization of the Beautiful Planet was sparked by a realization she had when examining the Chinese character for



**Dario Mohr**

*Trophies of War: Kingdom of Light*, 2023  
Installation View

the United States, 美国, which can also be translated as “beautiful country” in Mandarin. This linguistic connection informs the underlying theme of the installation, shedding light on Wang’s personal experience as an immigrant in the United States. Through her work, she addresses the questions and challenges faced by people of color and immigrants in a society that often scrutinizes and questions their presence, not only at the airport immigration desk but also in everyday interactions like the mundane exchange at a local grocery store. With *Hey Alien*, Wang aims to capture the essence of alienation and the perplexing rules of assimilation experienced by immigrants as they strive to integrate. The installation serves as a commentary on the complex dynamics of belonging, cultural identity, and the underlying power structures that shape these processes. Engaging participants by asking them to play the role of aliens, Wang provides a space for the audience to critically reflect on their own notions of inclusion and exclusion, while fostering empathy and understanding for those who find themselves navigating a new society.

In an age dominated by the relentless flow of information and visual overload, Gabrielle Ondine Mertz explores the ways in which we experience and utilize technology and contemporary information structures. With a practice grounded in the intersection of digital and analog mediums, Mertz embarks on an investigation that unearths the power and function of images in our current technologically driven society. Melding the realms of technology with traditional hand processes, Mertz begins her process by sourcing iconic moments in media, ranging

**Carrie Sijia Wang**

*Hey Alien: Welcome Flyers*, 2023

Print on paper

8.5 x 11 inches



from the first broadcast of 24-hour cable news to a C-SPAN camera capturing a prelude to the January 6 Capitol attack, and even a viral snippet from TikTok. These moments become the source material from which Mertz creates pigment paintings on paper, using a unique technique that involves digitally painting a set of moving image frames and physically layering them through pigment printing and hand-finishing. The six artworks on display, a result of this process, are deeply saturated pigment paintings that function as compressed moving images encapsulating a digital or broadcast moment and are reflective of the artist's fascination with the ways in which we digest information and navigate visual overload. By compressing a few seconds of moving images, similar to the timing of a GIF, and aggregating the frames into a single image, Mertz creates modern still lifes that convey society's abundance of information. Like historical still lifes, these works aim to distill a wealth of information into a single image, echoing the ongoing pursuit of conveying multifaceted narratives through visual art. Within the works themselves, the remnants and artifacts of technology specific to each era are also preserved and highlighted. Mertz's deliberate amplification of these elements, such as pixelation or video artifact, creates an archetype of the contemporary visual landscape as well as captures pivotal moments in our collective memory.

*The World Is Before You* weaves together a vibrant tapestry of artistic expression that offers insights into the intricacies of our complex world, converging threads of past, present, and future, and breaking down the confines that circumscribe us. By delving into personal and collective memories, histories, identities, politics, and social issues, the six artists reveal how their past and cultural backgrounds have significantly shaped their artistic identity as well as their way of looking at the world. Ultimately, the exhibition serves as an evocative stage where each artist dances—by reimagining the dominant narratives and creating alternative spaces for reflection, dialogue, and transformation.

Hawai'i, Hawai'i  
I saw as in a dream  
Now my tears are flowing  
In the cane fields



Hawai, Hawai, to yo  
Yume mite kita ga  
Nagasu namida wa  
Kibi no naka

# On Reworlding and Mediated Rupture, an essay for FeE, WG, MJ, GOM, DM, and CSW

by RE'AL CHRISTIAN

“The world is before you and you need not take it or leave it as it was when you came in.”<sup>1</sup> Here, James Baldwin evokes a particular dualism—an overlap between past and future, where a general *you* shifts into a collective *our*. Intertwining time and place, the personal and the collective, Baldwin subtly implores us to reimagine the world as we presently know it and to situate, by extension, our place within it. Taking up this invitation, one might consider what forms of relationality emerge amid entangled connections between self and place, how our identities are formed in response to environmental circumstances both within and beyond our control. Touching on themes of materiality, rebirth, and rematriation, *The World Is Before You* reveals such conscious praxes, featuring six artists who delve into aspects of identity formation embedded within material histories.

1 James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name* (New York: Dial Press, 1961), “In Search of a Majority: An Address”, 221.

For each artist in this exhibition—Francisco echo Eraso, Willa Goettling, Maya Jeffereis, Gabrielle Ondine Mertz, Dario Mohr, and Carrie Sijia Wang—labor, migration, and memory act as familiar points of departure. Eraso’s *Flor de cuatro pétalos* (2023) alludes to overlapping forms of labor—the medical, the artistic, and the administrative—through the lens of care practices. His installation hinges on durationality: an eight-harness floor loom, warped with over 4,000 linen threads, is accompanied by an audio description of the loom. Our slow, somatic response to the textile in its not-yet-complete form speaks to access-driven epistemologies pitted against the trappings of progress. Dario Mohr’s installation *Trophies of War: Kingdom of Light* (2023) concerns another form of visual vernacular through an exploration of the sacred. Mohr constructs everyday altars using the trophy as a central form, evoking the culture of fetish objects on the African continent and histories of head hunting, collecting and displaying human remains as a symbol of victory. Glass, wood, gold-painted leather braids yield individual talismans that, together, form a “kingdom,” in the artist’s words, a space in which collective histories are self-contained and protected.

In Maya Jeffereis’s two-part video installation *Fields Fallen from Distant Songs* (2023) and *Passages I* (2023), reclaims histories of Japanese labor on Hawai’ian sugarcane plantations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A cross-temporal narrative unfolds as ghostly images flicker across the screen: found footage of workers on



**Maya Jeffereis**

*Fields Fallen from Distant Songs*, 2023

Single-channel 4K video,

16mm film (color, sound)

11:30 minutes, looped

**Willa Goettling**

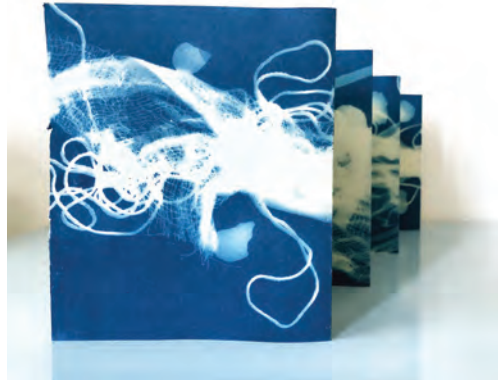
*a geology breaks in half to grow*, 2023

Risograph printed accordion fold book,

French's true-white speckleton paper

6 x 40 inches

(6 x 5 inches folded), Edition of 50



the plantations intersperse with popular folk songs, poetry, 16mm home movies shot by her grandfather in the 1960s, and the artist's own footage

of the eruption of Kīlauea in January 2023. The material, economic, and cultural connotations of sugar are inextricable from histories of migration and displacement, but Jefferies attempts to reframe this narrative by exploring notions of rematriation, of returning ancestral land. Disrupted soil becomes a space of continuous rebirth. Willa Goettling's installation similarly deals with generational ecologies. Inspired by her father's occupation as a stonemason, Goettling reveals hidden dualities embedded within materials—poetic phrases engraved into hard surfaces and a risograph that builds an intimate dialogue between human and nonhuman beings become allegory for examining one's roots. Working with the same material as her father, the artist makes herself a proxy to better understand his work while reflecting on larger issues of labor, capitalism, and their effects on the body, particularly in relation to her own work. In this process of reduction, of taking away to see what remains, Goettling explores stone as material, memorial, and metaphor.

Other artists in the exhibition explore the materiality of mediated experiences, both analog and digital. Gabrielle Ondine Mertz's series of saturated pigment paintings grapple with the realities of visual overload permeating modern media culture. In Mertz's work, the image frame becomes a reliquary for metadata

and obsolescence. In isolating and blowing up fragments of media, from viral videos and sensationalized news narratives to age-defining moments witnessed in real time, Mertz brings our attention to processes of information capture that underlie the media landscape as we currently know it. Carrie Sijia Wang's interactive *Hey Alien: Integration Assessment Examination Practice Test* similarly enacts the digital, combining elements of real and fictional worlds. Misrecognition, mishearing, and misunderstanding are inherent in the AI's interface, but, as Wang observes, these interfaces are experienced both on and offline, digitally and physically. Rather than focusing on the potentiality of AI, Wang asks us to consider how the technology influences human to human interaction, how the technology mediates communications, generates prompts, predetermines how we perceive acceptability, normalcy, value, and agency adjacent to machines. In doing so, Wang evaluates our individual abilities to exist within this system, to code switch, to slip between.

With distinct methodologies and materials, Eraso, Goettling, Jeffereis, Mertz, Mohr, and Wang each reveal the symbiotic relationship between the self and a specific time and place, encountering new modes of identity formation that tend to exist when this connection is ruptured, an overflow of information searching for a material container. Returning to Baldwin's invitation, *The World is Before You* asks us to consider our own histories, our bodies, our output, to re-situate ourselves within the world as we know it. Thinking across labor, access, movement, and memory, the artists gathered here conjure their own means of worldbuilding, re-envisioning the present by speculating on what we leave behind.

Re'al Chrstian is a writer, editor, and researcher based in Queens, NY. Her work explores issues related to identity, diasporas, ecology, media, and materiality.

**Dario:** It must've been hard when the colonizers came and just divided up the land arbitrarily.

**Evans:** You see? That is what we're always saying these guys were strategic. The colonizers were very strategic—

**Dario:** —they knew—

**Evans:** —they knew that's why they were called divide and rule, divide and conquer. Once you're able to break these people, disintegrate them. So why do you think you will have Nigeria that is speaking English, then you have Togo, Benin, speaking French? Then you now have Ghana. So you imagine these two countries were speaking



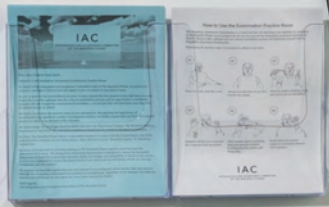
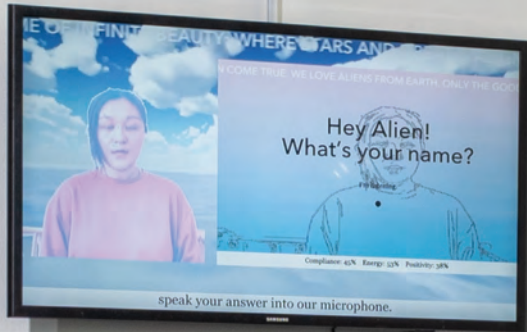
English in between, you could have seen how strong how unified it would've been, but now there is a vast difference between Benin and Togo's form of administration with Nigeria and Ghana. Nigeria and Ghana have something similar in administration, but different from Benin and Togo.

of the study. The first author (SJG) was involved in the development of the study, the design of the study, the collection and analysis of the data, and the writing of the paper. The second author (LW) was involved in the development of the study, the design of the study, the collection and analysis of the data, and the writing of the paper. The third author (LW) was involved in the development of the study, the design of the study, the collection and analysis of the data, and the writing of the paper. The fourth author (LW) was involved in the development of the study, the design of the study, the collection and analysis of the data, and the writing of the paper.

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# The Artwork



**Carrie Sijia Wang**

*Hey Alien: How to Use the  
Examination Practice Room, 2023*  
Video, 01:43 minutes

*Hey Alien: Welcome Flyers, 2023*  
Print on paper  
8.5 x 11 inches

*Hey Alien: Integration  
Assessment Examination Practice  
Tests, 2023 (right)*  
Interactive installation,  
03:00 minutes  
Dimensions variable









Dear Alien Creature from Earth,

Welcome to the Integration Assessment Examination Practice Room.

On behalf of the Integration and Acceptance Committee (IAC) of The Beautiful Planet, we extend our warmest greetings to those of you who aspire to join our planet as your future home.

As you prepare for the extraordinary journey, we have opened the first practice room right here on earth, to provide you with a glimpse into the cultural assimilation process and an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the Integration Assessment Examination, a crucial test that will determine your eligibility for settlement on our planet.

We invite you to enter the practice room at your convenience. Recognizing the importance of accommodating a significant number of prospective settlers, we kindly request that you limit your practice session to a maximum duration of five minutes.

We acknowledge the challenges faced by Earth ever since the Third Great Collapse. The Beautiful Planet is determined to help those who are ready to embrace a fresh start in a world of abundant possibilities.

Fun fact, The Beautiful Planet shares a remarkable similarity in name with the United States—one of the most powerful countries on your home planet, often referred to as the “beautiful country” in Mandarin translations.

However, it is important to note that settling on The Beautiful Planet requires more than just the admiration of its name. The Integration Assessment Examination is designed to ensure the successful integration of those who possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and adaptability to thrive in our society. It serves as a safeguard to ensure the preservation of our values and the well-being of both our existing inhabitants and new settlers.

We express our heartfelt appreciation for your interest in becoming part of our society. May your journey through the Integration Assessment Examination be enlightening, regardless of the outcome. We wish you success and fulfillment on your quest for a new home among the cosmos.

With regards,

The Integration and Acceptance Committee of The Beautiful Planet

**Carrie Sijia Wang**

*Hey Alien: Welcome Flyers, 2023*

Print on paper

8.5 x 11 inches



**Francisco echo Eraso**

*Flor de cuatro pétalos, 2023*

Dyed linen yarn, floor loom, Open Audio

Description, Ongoing performance

Dimensions variable







**Francisco echo Eraso**  
*Flor de cuatro pétalos*, 2023  
Installation details





**Dario Mohr**  
*Trophies of War: Kingdom  
of Light, 2023*  
Installation View





*Agokansie*, 2023  
(back right)  
Wooden pillar, stone  
mask, acrylic paint,  
coconut, photogra-  
phy collage printed on  
window film adhered to

plastic cylinder, acrylic  
on leather rope Glowing  
speaker and audio  
recording: Conversation  
with guides Confidence  
and Evans of Ucomeafrik  
72 x 16 x 16 inches



**Dario Mohr**

*Agokansie*, 2023

Wooden pillar, stone mask, acrylic paint, coconut, photography collage printed on window film adhered to plastic cylinder, acrylic on leather rope

Glowing speaker and audio recording:  
Conversation with guides Confidence and Evans of Ucomeafrik

72 x 16 x 16 inches



*Obosomfo 1*, 2023

Acrylic tile, photography collage printed on window film adhered to gold painted metal object, broken hourglass, chain, wooden drawer, object assemblage, LED light, acrylic on leather rope

16.5 x 8 x 8 inches

*Ohemmaa*, 2023

Custom made Finial commissioned from Accra, Ghana (IG: @dotcomarts), light cover, acrylic tile, photography collage printed on window film adhered to plastic cylinder, LED light, metal vase, acrylic on leather rope

10 x 2.5 x 1.5 inches



*Ponko 1, 2023*

Hourglass, wood, chains, trophy piece, marble, acrylic paint, glass, incense burner pieces, photography collage printed on window film adhered to trophy piece and paper weight, metal chalice, LED light, acrylic on leather rope  
14 x 11 x 9 inches

*Ponko 2, 2023*

Chains, trophy piece, wood, acrylic paint, acrylic tile, glass, incense burner lid, photography collage printed on window film adhered to plastic bucket, LED light, acrylic on leather rope.  
13.5 x 12 x 12.2 inches



*Thene, 2023*

Snow globe, acrylic tile, photography collage printed on window film adhered to plastic cylinder, LED light, acrylic on leather rope  
25 x 8 x 8 inches



*Obosomfo 2, 2023*

Acrylic tile, photography collage printed on window film adhered to plastic object, candle holder, wood, acrylic paint, trophy piece, LED light, acrylic on leather rope  
17 x 8 x 8 inches



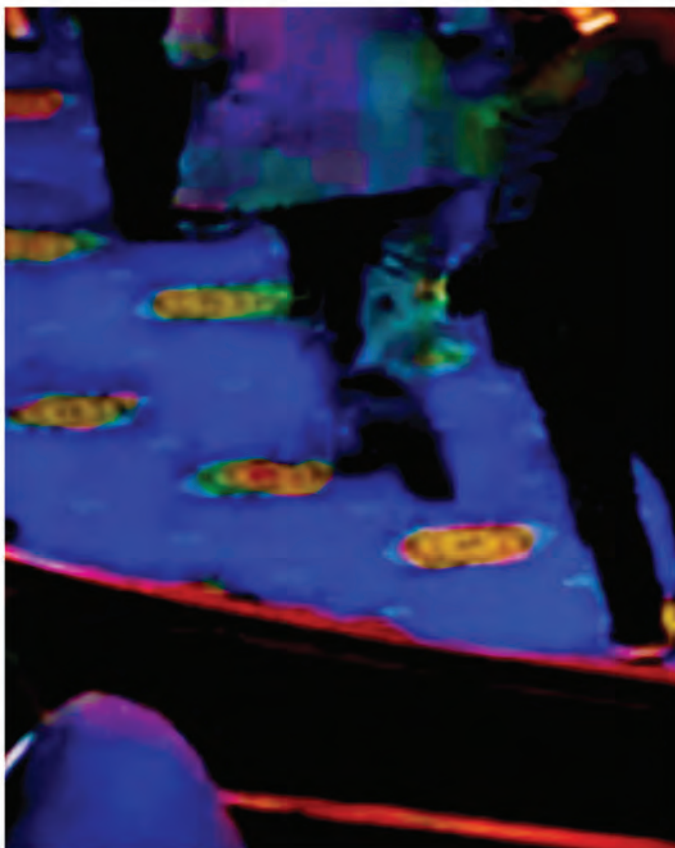
**Gabrielle Ondine Mertz**  
*We've Been Waiting For You, Fox News  
Launch, October 7 1996, 2023*  
Pigment painting on paper  
32.5 x 31 inches



*Partly Cloudy And Hot With A 20 Percent  
Chance Of An Afternoon Thunderstorm,  
Weather Channel, 1988, 2023*  
Pigment painting on paper  
36 x 31 inches



*Constant Transmission Can't Stop Won't  
Stop, CNN, First 24-hour news  
broadcast, June 1 1980, 2023  
Pigment painting on paper  
36 x 31 inches*



**Gabrielle Ondine Mertz**

*Feelin's Believin', C-SPAN House Feed,*

*January 6 2021, 2023*

Pigment painting on paper

36 x 25.25 inches



*Nothing Like A Renegade,*  
*Tiktok, 2019, 2023*  
Pigment painting on paper  
36 x 24 inches







**Maya Jeffereis**

*Fields Fallen from Distant*

*Songs*, 2023 (left)

Single-channel 4K video,  
16mm film (color, sound)

11:30 minutes, looped

*Passages I*, 2023 (right)

Single-channel 4K  
video, 16mm film (color,  
silent), sugar glass screen

05:00 minutes, looped



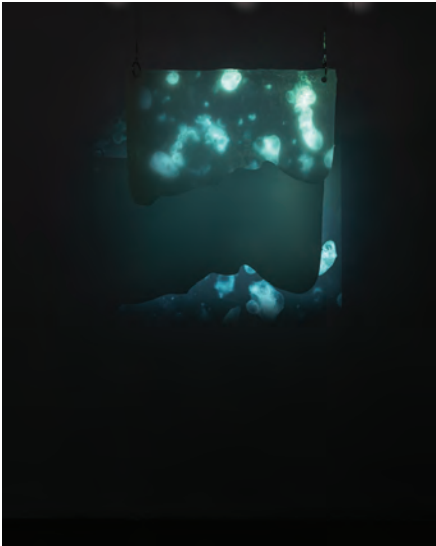
**Maya Jeffereis**

*Fields Fallen from Distant Songs*, 2023

Single-channel 4K video,

16mm film (color, sound)

11:30 minutes, looped



*Passages I*, 2023  
Single-channel 4K video, 16mm film  
(color, silent), sugar glass screen  
05:00 minutes, looped



**Willa Goettling**

*a geology breaks in half to grow, 2023*

Risograph printed accordion fold book,

French's true-white speckletone paper

6 x 40 inches

(6 x 5 inches folded), Edition of 50



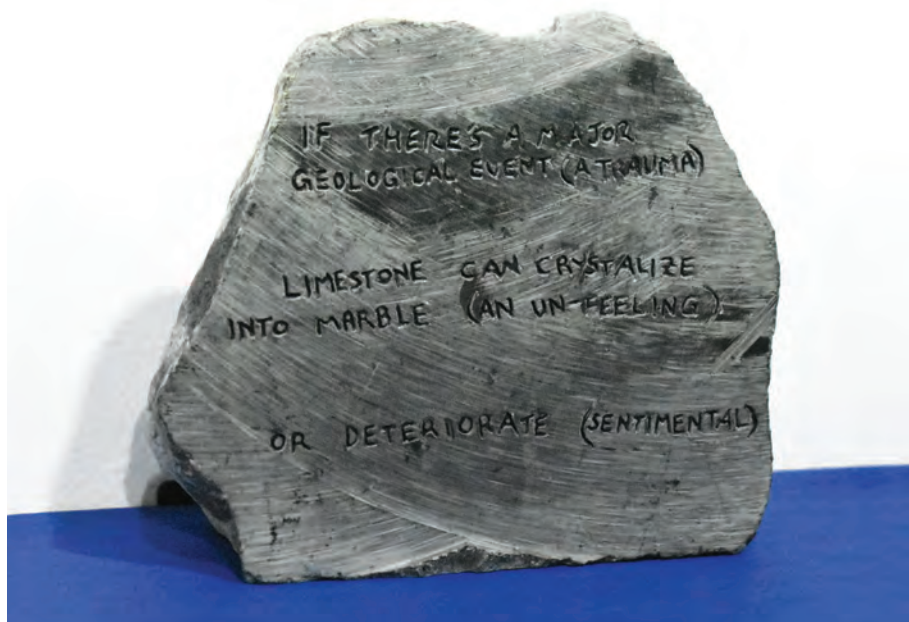


Front: *the temperature of dissociation / the process of dissolution*, 2023. 35mm photograph printed on adhesive window cling, plexi glass, calcium carbonate, hardware  
14 x 21 inches.

Back, from left to right:  
*a geology breaks in half to*

*grow*, 2023. Risograph printed accordion fold book, French's true-white speckletone paper  
6 x 40 inches (6 x 5 inches folded)  
Edition of 50.

*untitled (stones I-IV)*, 2023.  
Hand-carved soapstone,  
black acrylic ink



**Willa Goettling**

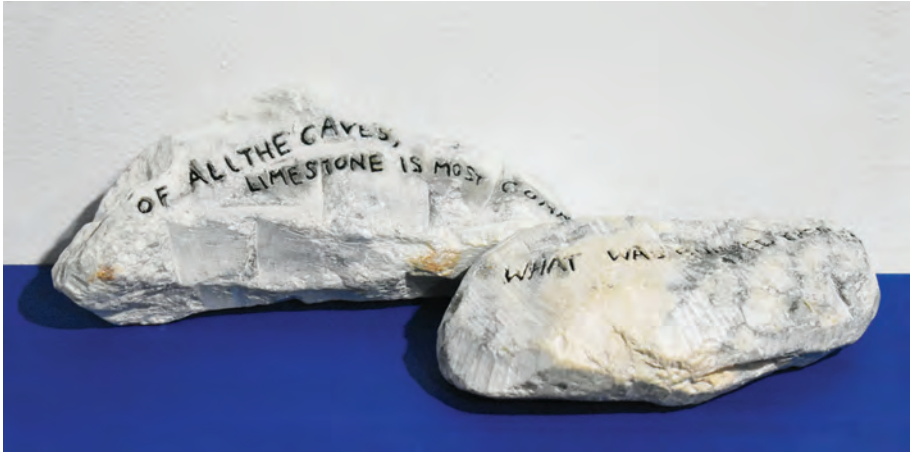
*untitled (stone i)*, 2023

Hand-carved soapstone,

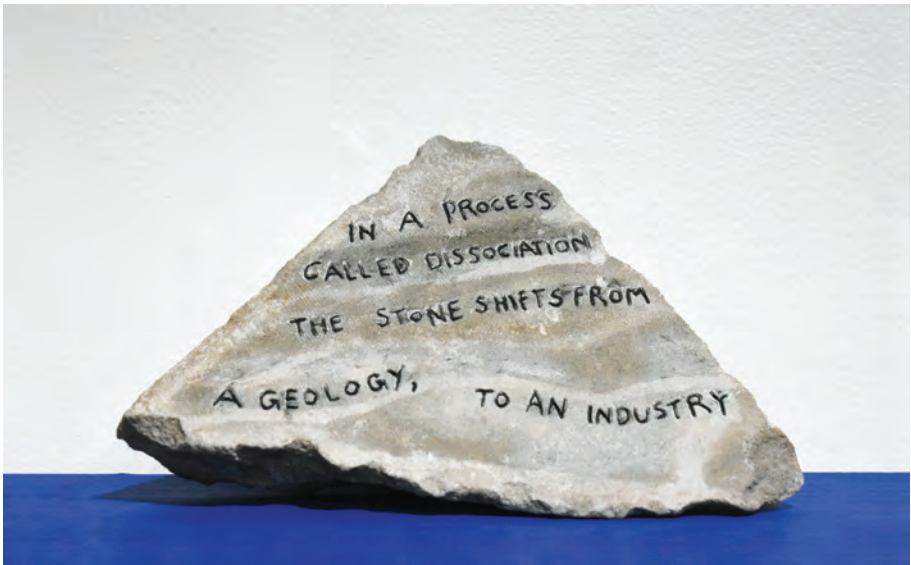
black acrylic ink

8 x 7 x 3 inches





*untitled (stones iv, iii), 2023*  
Hand-carved soapstone,  
black acrylic ink  
8 x 4 x 2.5 inches; 9.5 x 4 x 2 inches



*untitled (stone ii), 2023*  
Hand-carved soapstone,  
black acrylic ink  
11 x 8 x 6 inches



# The Artists

## *Francisco echo Eraso*

Francisco echo Eraso (he/él) is a disabled, trans, Colombian-American interdisciplinary craft artist, educator, arts administrator and access consultant. Eraso works in sculpture, woven textiles, ceramics, text, performance and sound, and draws from disability justice, trans liberation, and cooperative textile movements. His practice deals with the social construction of value by referencing the colonial, indigenous and queer histories of gold. He holds a dual degree in Visual Studies and Fine Arts from Parsons, the New School. He is currently an artist in residence at FABSCRAP and The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts' SHIFT residency for arts workers. He has presented his work at a variety of venues including Ford Foundation Gallery, Sheila C. Johnson Gallery, Chashama Gallery, Westbeth Gallery, Columbia Law School, Virginia Commonwealth University, Museum of Art and Design, University of Illinois, Chicago, among others. Eraso currently works as the associate manager of access and inclusion at the Whitney Museum and access coordinator of Proclaiming Disability Art through NYU's Center for Disability studies.

## *Willa Goettling*

Willa Goettling is an artist and educator interested in art as a tool for information sharing and community building. Her own art practice is largely based around the production and distribution of printed matter. Willa received her MFA in Interdisciplinary Book & Paper from Columbia College Chicago (2019) and BA in Medical Anthropology & Global Health from the University of Washington (2016). While at Columbia, she was a Print Production Fellow and contributing writer for the *Journal of Artists' Books*; taught undergraduate and graduate printmaking

workshops; and received an Albert P Weisman Award for her MFA thesis. In 2020 she was an Artist in Residence at Eureka! House via the Center for Artistic Activism (Kingston, NY). She has taught workshops at Parsons, Ugly Duckling Presse, and Interference Archive among organizations around the country. She currently serves as the Programs Manager at Smack Mellon Gallery (Brooklyn, NY).

### *Maya Jeffereis*

Maya Jeffereis is an artist working video, performance, and installation whose work seeks to expand upon overlooked histories and archival gaps through counter and personal narratives, offering both critical perspectives and speculative possibilities. Jeffereis' work has been shown in the United States and internationally, including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Queens Museum, New Britain Museum of American Art, among others. Jeffereis is a recipient of the A.I.R. Gallery Fellowship and Cisneros Initiative for Latin American Art. She has been a participant in Asia Art Archive in America and an artist-in-residence at Lower Manhattan Cultural Center (LMCC), Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity, Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, and SOMA Mexico.

### *Gabrielle Ondine Mertz*

Gabrielle Ondine Mertz is a multidisciplinary artist with a practice that explores contemporary information structures and issues through the use of altered technology, printmaking, photography, and other forms. Mertz creates images, installations, and other works that expose and reimagine digital, architectural,

social, and environmental spaces and systems. Previously the Founder/Artistic Director of Ondine and Company, she has created exhibitions, performances, and site-specific projects on stages, on tour, and on screen. Her work has been exhibited in the United States and Europe at the Cultural Center of Krakow, New Museum, High Museum, International Dance Festival, Rialto Center for the Performing Arts, Susquehanna Museum of Art, and King Plow Arts Center, among others. She is the recipient of commissions/awards from the Cultural Olympiad, Rauschenberg Foundation, Open Society Foundation, City of Atlanta, Georgia Council for the Arts, Center for Artistic Activism, and Netherland-America Foundation, among others. Her work on cultural policy with nonprofit organizations, governmental entities, and international institutions includes The United Nations Economic & Social Council, Obama For America, The John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Arts for AIDS, The Carter Center, Institute for Global Policy, Coalition for the International Criminal Court, and International Rescue Committee, among others. She has served as a board member/on the advisory panel of the Emory Women's Center, Bronx Council on the Arts, Atlanta Coalition for the Performing Arts, NYC Cultural Development Fund, and Fulton County Arts Council, among others. She has taught/lectured at New York University, Bruce High Quality Foundation University, Emory University, and Image Film & Video Center, among others. She is the Director of Drawing Out The Vote, a voter education program mobilizing turnout and access to information through collaboration with the creative community.

### *Dario Mohr*

Dario Mohr is a first generation Grenadian, U.S. citizen born in 1988. Based in New York City, Mohr is an interdisciplinary

artist, educator and non profit leader. He received a BFA in Painting from Buffalo State College, an MFA in Studio Art from The City College of New York and an Advanced Certificate in Art Education from Queens College. His work involves the creation of "sacred spaces" referencing his heritage, and expressing commentary on the cultural zeitgeist through immersive sanctuary experiences. His practice is interdisciplinary, converging painting, sculpture, installation, digital art and film. In addition to his individual art practice, he is also the Founder and Director of AnkhLave Arts Alliance, Inc. which is a non-profit arts organization for the recognition and representation of BIPOC artists in contemporary art.

### *Carrie Sijia Wang*

Carrie Sijia Wang is an artist and educator based in New York. Combining art, technology, and research, she makes performances, videos, and participatory experiences to explore the humanization of machines and the mechanization of humans. Wang is a Year 8 member of NEW INC, 2021 Pioneer Works resident, and 2020 Mozilla Creative Media Award recipient. She has shown and presented work with venues including Rhizome, New Museum, Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Onassis Foundation, ACM SIGGRAPH, and A.I.R. Gallery. Her work has been featured in publications including the Business Insider, Slate, and Computerworld. She teaches Interactive Media Arts at NYU.



Assistant Curator  
*Minji Lee*

Minji Lee is an independent curator and writer based in New York City. She received a B.F.A in Curatorial Studies from Dongduk Women's University in Seoul, South Korea. Before moving to the U.S. she worked at various contemporary art institutions in South Korea including the Busan Biennale Organizing Committee, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA), and the Coreana Museum of Art. In 2019, she curated the group exhibition *Dear America* at CP Projects Space in New York City, where she invited four Asian American artists to address the issues of race, multiple identities, and the Asian diaspora experience in the U.S. Currently, she is pursuing a Master's degree in Art History at Hunter College (CUNY) where she focuses on post/de-colonial theory, critical race theory, and social/political artistic practices by BIPOC artists.

**EFA Project Space**

323 W. 39th St, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10018  
projectspace@efanyc.org  
www.projectspace-efanyc.org

EFA Executive Director:  
Jane Stephenson

EFA Deputy Director: HC Huỳnh

EFA Project Space Director and Chief  
Curator: Naomi Lev

Gallery Manager: Agustina Markez

Gallery Assistant: Charlie Fischetti

Gallery Intern: Mila Wong, LeRoy  
Neiman and Janet Byrne Neiman  
Foundation Summer Intern

EFA Project Space, launched in  
September 2008 as a program of The  
Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, is  
a collaborative, cross-disciplinary  
arts venue founded on the belief  
that art is directly connected to the  
individuals who produce it and the  
communities that arise because of it.  
By providing an arena for exploring  
these connections, we empower artists,  
curators, and other participants to  
forge new partnerships and encourage  
the expansion of ideas.

The program is based on Open Calls  
as well as invitational exhibitions and  
projects. It is a home for emerging,  
mid-career, as well as established  
curators and artists. We focus our  
attention on community engagement  
and public programming.

The Elizabeth Foundation for the  
Arts is a 501(c)(3) public charity,  
dedicated to providing artists across  
all disciplines with space, tools and a  
cooperative forum for the development  
of individual practice. We are a catalyst  
for cultural growth, stimulating new  
interactions between artists, art  
professionals, creative communities,  
and the public.

EFA Project Space has received public  
funding from the New York City  
Department of Cultural Affairs in  
Partnership with the City Council,  
The Andy Warhol Foundation for the  
Visual Arts, the Shelley & Donald  
Rubin Foundation, and the National  
Endowment for the Arts, the Lower  
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Copy Editor of *The World We Dance*:  
Jessica Holmes

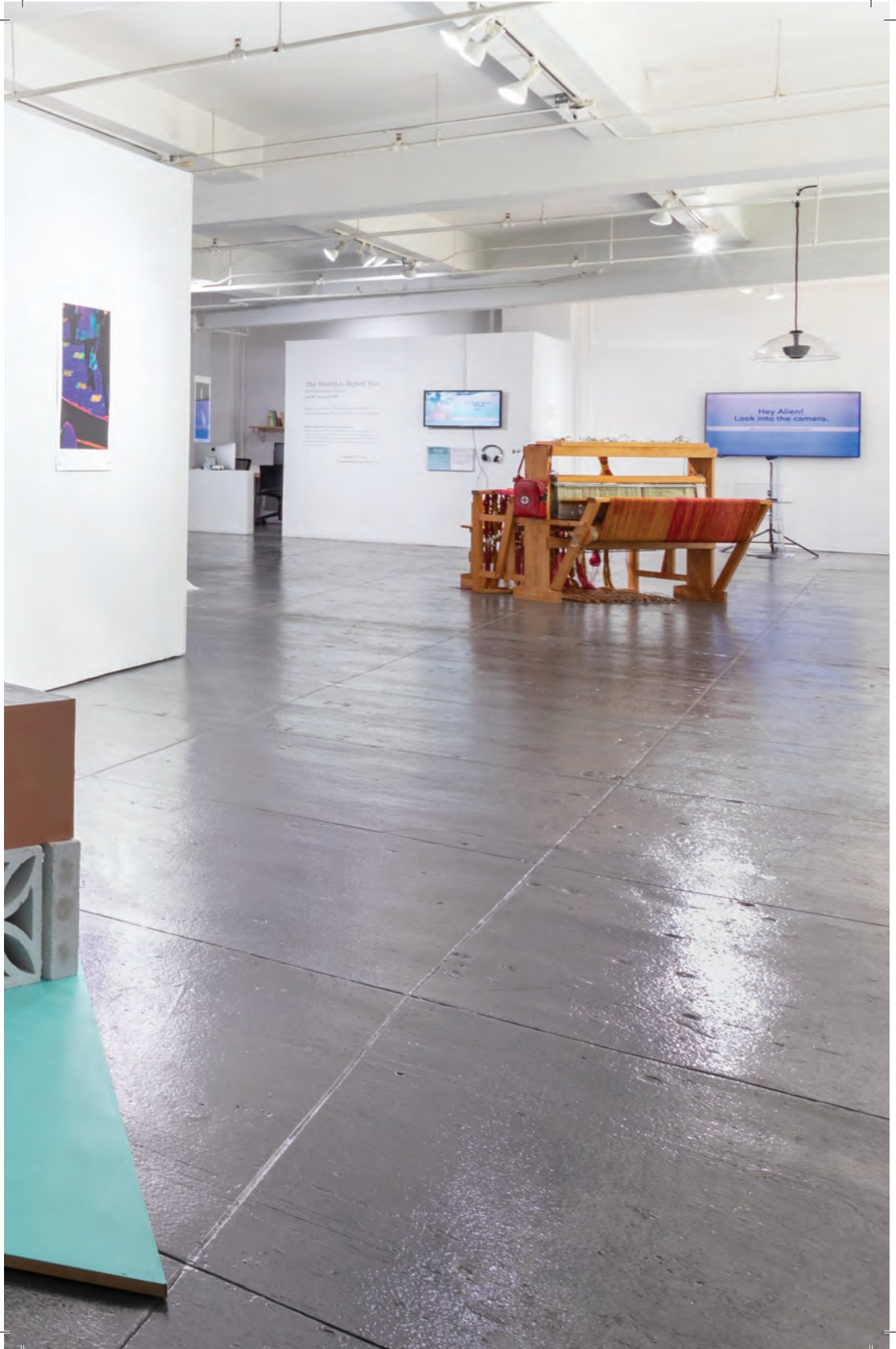


what qualifies limestone is its  
high quantity of calcium  
limy remains from fossilized  
marine debris  
clams oysters crustaceans  
gregarious in habit,  
roll around and accumulate

the stone is abundant across  
the globe  
but varies in texture, and slightly  
in composition  
Oolite limestone, common  
in Florida,  
comes from the greek “egg stone”—  
tends to have thin concentric layers  
analogous to tiny tree rings  
but spherical instead of cylindrical

cumulative  
they grow and form in regions where  
currents are strong, forceful  
needing to keep moving in order to  
keep growing  
calcium ooze solidifies under weight  
and if there's a major geological event  
(a trauma)  
the stone can crystalize into marble  
(an un-feeling)  
or it might deteriorate  
(sentimental)





The World Is Better Now

by [unreadable]

[unreadable]

[unreadable]

[unreadable]

[unreadable]

[unreadable]

