



WELCOME HOME

Her Liminal Asian-Appalachian Experiences

Curated by José Ardivilla and Kreneshia Whiteside



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Her Liminal Asian-Appalachian Experiences

**Beizar Aradini
Leticia Bajuyo
Miyuki Akai Cook
Sonya Yong James
Meena Khalili
Marta Lee
Vy Ngo
Elena Øhlander
Sisavanh Phouthavong
Halide Salam**

Curated by José Ardivilla and Kreneshia Whiteside

CURATOR'S THOUGHTS

By Kreneshia Whiteside

The title actually came by way of Marta Lee. One of her works not featured in the collection is titled "Welcome Home" and when I read it I said, "that's it," because it applied on so many levels. The title plays with the common American greeting that verifies a place of belonging, while also offering the idea of sarcasm in regards to expectations vs reality. Confronting each of those interpretations is what the exhibition as a whole is intended to explore.

As an African American woman born and raised in the Appalachia, I assumed when I decided to take on this project that I was completely oblivious to the experiences of my Asian sisters. The more I learned, the more I realized that we actually have many similarities in regards to our struggles, but our cultures have completely different foundations. Aside from the grand geographic variance between America and the Asian diaspora, many of the artists have a connection with their roots and access to their family history that not only influences their art but their 'adaptation blueprint.' What I mean by that is, these women have an awareness of themselves and their past to help get them started- whether that be at home or in a new land. African-Americans, on the other hand, have had their history erased and replaced by generations of an inhumane nightmare. We don't know where to start, so we pick up where we left off and make it our own. That journey of creating 'home' is where our commonalities begin to weave in. Obstacles we share, for example, with the Muslim community is the false label of being a threat, and an awareness that freedom of speech can lead to serious danger. As women, we have to deal with the over-sexualized view of ourselves brought on by pop culture, along with the everyday stereotypes (which ironically in this situation are complete opposites with each other).



Our homelands are considered disease hotbeds and our native traditions are appropriated. Not to mention a political history of being considered the enemy to the point where camps, prisons, and even death were (and unfortunately at times still is) an option. Yet, in spite of the battles in our surroundings our cultures are resilient and show expression with a great deal of passion especially in the arts. We make the best out of what we have and in the end, that's all a home is.

THE MANY PORTALS TO HOME

By José Ardivilla

Asian-Americans have heard this question in some form or another. The query is scaffolded on how Asian-presenting people in America can “speak good English” which leads to the question “Where are you from?” If the answer is not so exotic like some small American town, the question turns belligerent “No, but where are you really from?”

The insistence on where one is really from casts this shadow over Asian-Americans as not really being adequately American. Not American enough. Yet, these Asian-Americans who have gone through the waves and motions of diaspora, find themselves not “Asian” enough. This not being enough opens up to a liminality; to belong to many places, to be not of just one place, to be a border crosser in the metaphorical and violently political case.

Co-curator Kreneshia Whiteside came up with the “Welcome Home” to situate the irony of home as not really a distinct location with clear cut boundaries, but that of layers to go through, portals to cross, obstacles to encounter and overcome. Whiteside opines “The title plays with the common American greeting that verifies a place of belonging, while also offering the idea of sarcasm in regards to expectations vs reality. Confronting each of those interpretations is what the exhibition as a whole is intended to explore. Aside from the grand geographic variance between America and the Asian diaspora, many of the artists have a connection with their roots and access to their family history that not only influences their art but their ‘adaptation blueprint.’ What I mean by that is, these women have an awareness of themselves and their past to help get them started- whether that be at home or in a new land.”

What Whiteside speaks of as “adaptation blueprint” comes from being in the “Liminality” which this exhibition is a demonstration of place-making and place-sensing, a negotiation and a claiming of space. Yet this space, for the Asian-American, is a protracted in-betweenness, with one’s “Americanness” being in doubt; that one’s “Asian-ness” is cut off from “the” Asia which casts the word “authenticity” as proximal to the “motherland.” And is authenticity a location? Is home a location? Or a feeling? That homeland and citizenship are on shifting sands of such tense negotiations in need of constant affirmations from these artists. Liminality can also mean placelessness or not really belonging and that is through the lens of “Appalachia” which is a geographical cultural construct that does not usually include Asian-Americans.

Thus, home and the welcoming to that home is to subject oneself to many doors, and portals to pass through, to take pause, and to situate oneself between taking stock of the present and gauging

the future paths while careful not to lose the present to the periphery. To be Asian-American, a woman, and an artist, one is confronted with such hyphenated existence, some of which are polar, yet overlapped which gives ease to crossing and causing many portals. The portals I invoke can be encapsulated with the following themes in cognizant with Co-curator Whiteside's exhibition design: (1) Tipton Gallery situates transit, arrival and obstacles, in which I would cite as "Contact and confrontation," (2) For Slocumb Gallery Right, Whiteside brackets the works dealing with identity and politics, which I posit as "threading through narratives," and (3) Slocumb Gallery Left offers glimpses on issues associated with migration which I mark as "the Greener Pasture is always a border issue." This is not to demarcate the works as distinct clusters of thematic approach. The artists' works are interspersed in these spaces to show the interconnectedness despite the broad range of issues the women worked with. All the works in this exhibit overlap the themes and intersect those with issues of being a woman and working with the perceived limitations to broker for accessibility and validation in America. It is worth noting that the women's works are allocated in different galleries to situate the complex navigation one has to go through in an insistence of home. In the following, I shall discuss some of the works that can be seen in these spatial dynamics.

Transit, Arrival, Obstacles | Contact and Confrontation

The artists in this exhibition have currency for negotiation. It may be seeking and claiming space. It may be a confronting of spaces that focus on an imposed limitation, It may be a negotiation of translating from one culture to another. In the act of translation, these artists vacillate in between spaces which they somewhat belong to as they somehow lay claim. The "somehow" and "somewhat" align the positions of many diasporic people as not fully-formed, not fully-secure, not fully-clear cut. Such clarity of identity is a privilege many immigrants do not have. **Sonya Yong James'** use of horse hair speaks of her sneaking into a ranch as a young child to reach out and touch the beautiful horses. She later found out that ranch was owned by a Klansman and she processed that on how there are spaces that disallow her. In her growing up, she wonders why are there places not meant for her. Such a confrontation of limitation is something many Asia-American women are confronted by. There is a diptych by **Marta Lee** that show us that to be diasporic is a constant act of translation. In her diptych, aptly titled *Translation*, Lee borders both canvases with the continuation of her last name as if a fence to cluster words which she encounters. One is in English and the other one in Cantonese. Though these are separate paintings, the fact that she connects them together as a diptych is not a show of separation but a possibility of code-switching which many Asian-Americans have engaged in their communication to retain from their culture while being in America. Sometimes, this code-switching as bilingualism is not really reserved to just language. **Miyuki Akai Cook's** story crosses

oceans and vast swathes of land as she hailed from Japan and to study and eventually become a practicing artist in the US. She has tethered her material exploration with Japan's history of dyes and maritime engagement. Her works are reminiscent of waves cresting amidst the vast tracks of mountains of the Appalachia. Her story is that of many immigrants and of diaspora which is a transculturation. Such transculturation is familiar to **Halide Salam** who has seen through the dissolution of a country's territory (from East Pakistan to what is now Bangladesh) to certain cultural clashes she has to deal with in her years in America. Her narratives are deliberately obscured within layers of images crisscrossing cultures which is about the danger of crossing the line in America. But who draws this line? Such narratives are what Salam explores in her works that do not seek easy clarification but an embedded sense of bewilderment over such violence over difference as she plumbs these down in metaphors.

Identity and Politics | Threading through the Narratives

Home has been thought of a specific place. Yet, in this exhibition, the artists have to course through time zones, history, land masses, not just to seek a better life, but in their seeking they are in danger of a cultural forgetting. **Meena Khalili** keeps contact with her past by recording her father's stories. She translates those stories onto printed words on a fabric which she exposes to the rain and once can see the words slough off, dissipating in entropy like fading memories. She uses that bolt of fabric and turns it into a chador to enshroud her with words, not to obscure herself but to be encased by the stories. **Elena Øhlander**, on the other hand, openly handles what many people expect of East Asian visuality which is the prevalence of cuteness with her work such as *Kung Flu*. Yet, Øhlander marks these cute implements (reminiscent of the Japanese kawaii culture) as an inversion and as a political platform for counter-utterance. In 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic has upended the world, many people have focused their hatred at what they assume as the cause of the outbreak: Chinese culture. Yet, in such boldfaced ignorance, many clump together East Asian as one unit, and this is demonstrated by Øhlander's portraits of cuteness but with ornaments of provocation that need to be confronted for the country to deal with its still present racism positioning Asian bodies as aberrant. Such aberration situates many Asian-American stories stemming from migration which **Beizar Aradini** uses threads to sew together her and her family's experience of the Kurdish diaspora. She has incorporated the tradition of Kurdish women weaving and sewing clothes intertwined with storytelling of roots. Aradini renders family portraits not as documentation but as an engagement with her past. The tactility involved in needlework and threads are a way of listening to stories that are otherwise shunted in silence. Yet, her works are punctuated with frayed, loose ends which makes an interesting pivot of the ongoing roots and routes of the diaspora.

Migration | Greener Pasture is a Border Issue

Migration offers the dynamic of overlapping identities that inform a grand concept like chasing the “American dream” to the subtle shifts of the everyday. Its utterance of hybridization can be in the visual of the everyday which **Leticia Bajuyo** captures the shifting landscapes she has encountered which informed her work. Bajuyo’s rolled turfs of pristine green lawns is what means to have greener pasture which is to seek the American dream, which to her can be aligned with home ownership. Bajuyo has overlapped the general desire for manicured lawns via material and processual investigation through the lens of the dream that which informs the diaspora. The yard is an indicator of sociological aspirations for the American suburban bucolic. The lush greenery is indicative of a promise of plenty. Such promises stem from foment coming from many cases of immigrants who sought refuge in America. For some participating artists in this exhibition, they are driven to American in search of the greener pasture away from the blights of war and want. **Vy Ngo**’s bright and colorful portraits may invoke a sheen of joy and mirth and yet part of the palette is the uncertainty and bewilderment she has lived through. In her self-portrait as a young girl, she is enveloped by warm colors as she stands beaming next to a television. Portraiture maybe hinged on likeness, but for Ngo, portraiture is an act of self-discovery via memory as well as self-assertion. In this particular painting, the migrant smile is a component of layered texture enveloped with clothes from the Church group that has facilitated for the concerns of immigrant families. She stands next to an old television set which served as a portal for acclamation for many migrants to negotiate their paths in this land, of which they reached from crossing an ocean and continents. Such a transoceanic act of survival is also found in **Sisavanh Phouthavong**’s work that are cascading portraits of a people that have surmounted different obstacles in seeking greener pastures. Phouthavong sought out participants for her piece Transparent voices. People sent her ID photos in which she printed in a way to make them diaphanous portraits. The result is like eerie ghost-like apparitions on fragile tendrils. This is not to say that the people in the photographs are all deceased but the phantasm of identity is what dogs many an Asian-American experience. To be an Asian-American can be a sense of lingering for an imagined homeland and for a fantasy future of plenty.

Let me reiterate that the thematic approach is not segmentation but are glimpses. Such glimpses are clues heralded by all the works in this exhibition. These works are paths and portals of the massive intensive undertaking of an inner life confronted by a bewildering swathe of Appalachia. With the portals and how these women clarified their senses of home, we then begin to ask: Is home just a place? Home is such a fraught word. Home is not an innocent word. It is not just a vision of Pleasantville-like idyll where everything is clean and calm plucked out from the visual tropes of advertising. Home is a means of a determination.

Is home just an address? Or is home a way of addressing? The women in this exhibition have had such ways and motions of the sense of home that is always in question. What connects the women in this exhibition is not just merely focused on an “Asian” homeland (“Asian” is a contested concept that is convoluting geopolitics, identity, always in danger of veering into Orientalism; whereas homeland is an imagined ur or even utopia of people of the diaspora), but having found themselves in the shifting sands of liminality in a region that is vast as it is formidable which is the Appalachia.

For these women, “home” is never that simple.

“Home” is a quest and not a place. “Home” can be imaginary and can be real. “Home” is what is and what was with lenses of what should be and what could be. For these women of the diaspora, “home” is not easily safe and not easily accepted. “Home” is a nervous energy flitting between insistence and acceptance. “Home” is not either/or or neither/nor but an overlapping of those prescriptions set amidst these artists’ notions and declarations.

In such a layered grid of many nuances, the notion of home is never singular. This is the same way for Appalachia where these women have encountered themselves in. Some of the women in this exhibit may have been born into this vast imagined cultural geography that stretches across many states. Some may have lived here for a time and some may have been sojourners, but all display a certain engagement with such vastness, not just of the Appalachia but of the diaspora into and across the Appalachia.

If home is settlement, how do these women convey a coming to terms or a settling with passing through many portals and thresholds?

If home is a place for contemplation, how do these women illuminate their lives with the places they sense and the places they make?

If home is heritage, then what is to be remembered and what needs to be forgotten in a new land that demands a new heritage?

If home is the present, what of the memories that still linger? What these women ultimately realize that feeling at home, and being home is being adequate on their own; always a declaration from the self. With that, these women welcome home.



About the Curators

José Santos P. Ardivilla is a political cartoonist, animator, and writer hailing from the Philippines. He is a Fulbright scholar in pursuit of PhD in Fine Arts at the Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. He has an MA Art Studies (Major in Art History) from the University of the Philippines Diliman College of Arts and Letters. His MA Thesis dealt with turn of the 20th Century Political Cartoons in the Philippines as part of the colonial machinery of America. He also earned his MFA from the University of the Philippines Diliman College of Fine Arts. His MFA Thesis exhibition is the magnification of political cartoons as immersive ala carousel depicting the seven sins of Christianity in the personages of the seven Philippine presidents to demonstrate the cyclical problem of political dynasties and cacique extraction. This particular work was selected by CNN Philippines as one of most notable art of the country in 2018. His current research courses through the Filipino diaspora, gender and queer studies, visual culture, and the attempts at decoloniality. His writings have been published internationally and he has been selected in exhibitions in the Philippines as well as abroad. Though he still identifies himself as a political cartoonist, he has given up on this endeavor considering the crop of politicians in the current geopolitical landscapes are experts at being violent and idiotic punchlines writing the jokes themselves.

<https://www.ardivilla.com/>

Chattanooga native, **Kreneshia Whiteside**, is an advocate for the arts devoted to fostering culture in the community. While attending an arts school for seven years, Kren developed an appreciation for emerging and working artists. After realizing her passion, she discovered the career of curation, obtained her degree, and now continues to dedicate her skills and gifts to presenting the creativity of others.

Kreneshia began curating in 2015 as a university senior and has since worked with entities such as Nashville's Frist Museum of Art, Augusta's Westobou Gallery, and works as the Chief Curator of a non-profit Chattanooga gallery. Expanding her realm, Kren works with other creatives outside of the southeast, for example the New York artist/fashion designer, Audrey Schilt, and the ever-traveling poet/artist, Genesis the Greykid. Her next major project involves abroad work in Venice, Italy.

"I'm conscious that my work is bigger than me- it's about the art. It's my responsibility to ensure the artist is heard and to evoke change in anyone that witnesses my curated exhibitions"

Over the past 5 years, Kren has curated 40+ collections of art.

<https://www.krenthecurator.com/>

The *'Visibility as Presence'* is a collaborative, interdisciplinary program that involves the presentation of visual art exhibitions with the performing arts such as poetry, film, and music. *'Visibility'* as presence is imperative during the current time characterized by *'fake news'*, *'war on media,'* and oppression of communities of color. Oftentimes, historical records and current event contents do not reflect the reality of minority communities, those who are marginalized, liminal individuals, queer gendered people, migrants and native peoples who have historically been *'erased'* or misrepresented, their presence are disregarded, their contributions scarcely recognized. This project provides images of self-representation, with form as encapsulation of these muted voices.

As a country of migrants, America has continued to struggle with its colonial past, history of racial supremacy, religious/ethnic discrimination, economic/capitalist vulture culture and refusal to recognize and address these issues in civilized, critical conversations. Instead, text books are politicized and revisionist narratives are espoused, real events of violence or triumphs by the minorities are hushed and silenced by those whose voices are in power wether politically or economically. Artists, academics and cultural activists are in extraordinary positions to push the boundaries and navigate complexities in various means, through education, creativity, and populist endeavors characterized often as *'solidarity bound by tragedy.'* The year 2020, what will be remembered as the Covid-19 pandemic year also serve as backdrop to the worldwide civil rights protests for Black Lives Matter against violent killings and police brutality imposed on colored bodies. Legal changes are not yielded voluntarily, they are products of hardship, solidarity, critical education and vigilance. The widely broadcasted incidents of police brutality has swayed citizens to come out in hoardes as allies of the colored communities, proof that visibility is significant and vital in social reform.

The project is a collaboration between the ETSU Slocumb Galleries under the Department of Art & Design, Student Activities Allocation Committee (SAAC), Tennessee Arts Commission's Arts Project Support (APS) & Arts Build Communities (ABC) grants, and East Tennessee Foundation (ETF) Arts' Fund with The Langston Centre, ETSU Language & Culture Resource Center (LCRC), Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center, regional K-12 public schools to serve intergenerational, and diverse communities of color, as well as various local communities. The diversity exhibitions are expansion of the *Diverse & Empowered Project* that received the 2020 Tennessee Association of Museums' (TAM) Award of Excellence for Temporary Exhibitions. Providing activities that promote critical discourse amidst social isolation during the COVID era are essential as safe, open platform to discuss issues of identity, race, equality, social justice, and empowerment through the arts.

- **Karlota Contreras-Koterbay**, *Project Director*

<https://www.etsu.edu/cas/art/galleries>

Beizar Aradini

My work explores the experience of living in the Kurdish diaspora. Memories, language, and traditions become essential to bind the past and present, reshaping our fragmented and displaced identities. There's a sense of in-betweenness in this inter-cultural space, a constant tug of neither this, nor that. What do we hold onto and what do we replace with the new? I try to process my family's history and journey of becoming immigrants through fiber techniques.

Sewing for my ancestors and family meant storytelling and survival. Without sewing skills, my family wouldn't have had the bare necessities to survive the harsh conditions in the refugee camps. Or simply to mend wear and tear in our tents, the same tent I was born under. I embroider family photos and memories to heal intergenerational trauma and understand what home means in this liminal space. The motion of stitching, over, under, over, under, allows me to time travel and reconnect with my ancestral home and mend the frayed parts of my identity.

Beizar Aradini was born in Mardin, Kurdistan and immigrated with her family to Nashville, Tennessee in 1992. Her work unravels her family's story as refugees and examines cultural displacement through fiber practices that have been crucial to the Kurdish identity.

Her work has been featured nationally in exhibitions such *Between the Seams* at Woman's Made Gallery in Chicago, Illinois and *Take Refuge* at Coop Gallery in Nashville, TN. Recently, Aradini was selected to create a piece that was inspired by a first-time voter and is currently on view at Frist Art Museum as part of the *We Count: First Time Voter's* exhibition. Aradini has worked many community projects in Nashville, including murals and instructing art workshops at The Oasis Center and Nashville Healing Arts for Tennessee Mental Health Consumers' Association.

<https://www.beizararadini.com/>



My Existence is Political, Thread, 3x6x48 inches [diptych, text not shown]



Family Ties, Thread, 7 x 21 inches



Americanized, Thread, 7x17 inches

In her studio practice, **Leticia R. Bajuyo** reflects on how cultural labels and demographic bubbles can foster a sense of fragmented displacement that is continually searching for equilibrium. As a Filipinx-American artist, her interest in perception and cultural capital began with her autobiography: growing up bi-racial, the daughter of an immigrant, and in a culturally isolated small, midwestern town on the border of Illinois and Kentucky gave her a unique perspective on the surrounding dominant culture. Similar to a strange attractor in physics, Bajuyo's search for equilibrium yields outcomes ranging from miniature to architectural in scale, from temporary to permanent in timeframe, and from drawings to interactive in installation as she invites audiences to participate in theatrical re-arbitrations of value.

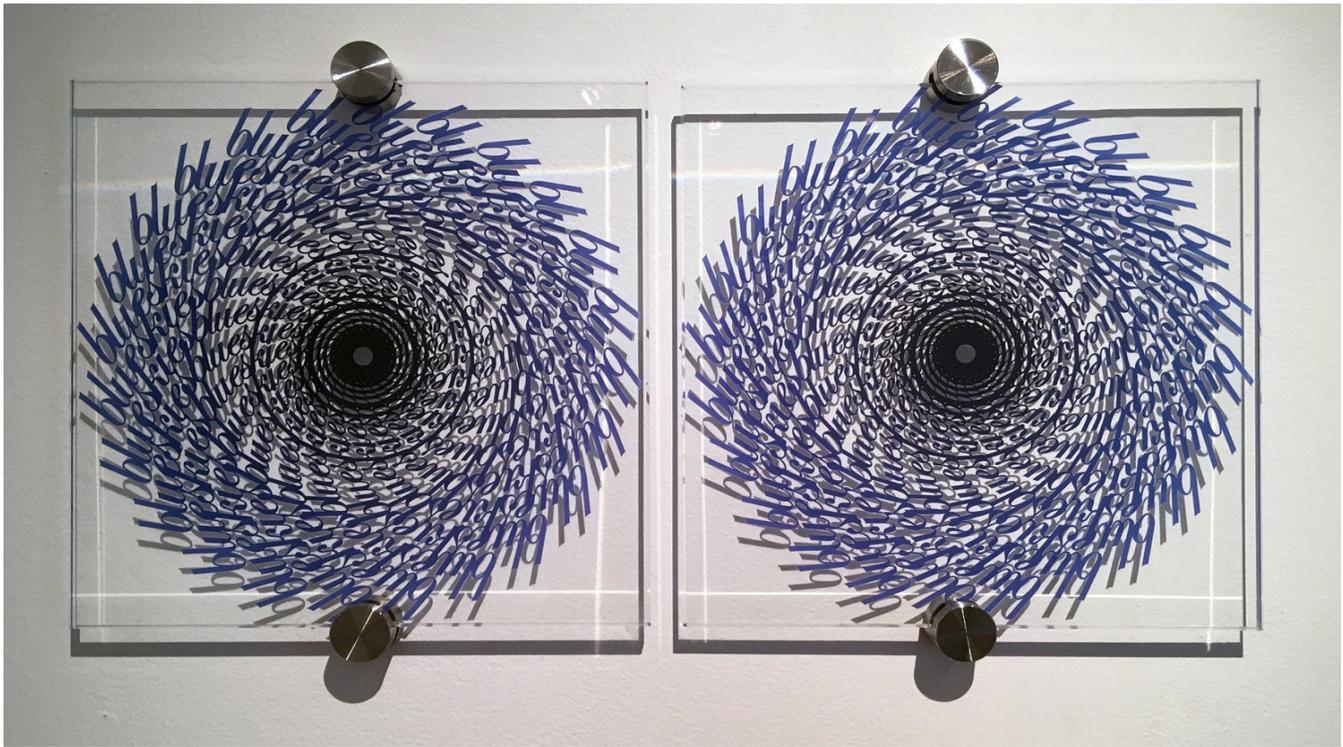
An interdisciplinary artist, object maker, and sculptor, Bajuyo lives, works, teaches in Corpus Christi, Texas. Her artworks have been exhibited nationally in recent solo exhibitions at the Beatrice M. Haggerty Gallery in Dallas Texas; Beeville Art Museum in Beeville, Texas; Hall Art Gallery at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi; the Rudolph Blume Fine Art Gallery in Houston, Texas; and K Space Contemporary in Corpus Christi, Texas. Recent international exhibitions include *FRAME OF MIND* 2016, a Northern Mindanao Contemporary Art exhibit in Mindanao, Philippines and the *2015 IV International From Waste to Art* Exhibition at the From Waste to Art Museum in Baku, Azerbaijan. Bajuyo's large-scale, site-specific art installations include creating artwork in the silos of the Site Gallery at Sawyer Yards in Houston, Texas; at Nashville International Airport in Tennessee; and in the Tony Hillerman Library in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

In addition to exhibitions of her individual artwork, Bajuyo seeks community and collaboration by participating in artist collectives. She is a member of *Project Vortex* - an international not-for-profit collective of artists, designers and architects actively focusing on the global problem of plastic pollution through our work. Furthermore, Bajuyo one of six artists in the *Land Report Collective* - a group artists in Wyoming, Tennessee, and Texas who create and exhibit artworks together as they deal with landscape in fundamental ways and as a foundational reference point. She is one of three artists comprising the TLC Art Collective whose approach to public art is intrinsically community-focused. Bajuyo is also a member of *ENID: Generations of Women Sculptors*, an organization of female sculptors who gather and exhibit in respect of Louisville native and recognized sculptor Enid Yandell (1869-1934). Bajuyo received her M.F.A. from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and her B.F.A. from the University of Notre Dame. Beginning fall 2017, Bajuyo joined the faculty at Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi where she is an Associate Professor of Art - Sculpture. Prior to this professorship in Texas, she served as a Visiting Assistant Professor in Sculpture at the University of Notre Dame and Professor of Art at Hanover College.

Leticia Bajuyo



Tighten Your Belt, Cast iron, artificial turf, Styrofoam, 29x27x27 inches



Doilies is a series of glass panels inspired by vinyl records, lace doilies, and vortices. In these panels, the doily-like spirals of text become hypnotic vortices with a mantra of “blue skies,” “green grass”, and “white clouds” that is echoed in the shadows on the wall.



Edge Friction is a series of glass panels focusing on the interstates and highways that take drivers past a range of components that support a contemporary lifestyle: landfills, bales of hay, an old company coming down, a new distribution center going up, and so on. Road engineers adjust the “edge friction” encourage drivers to slow down or speed up by controlling how many or how few vertical elements are within the driver’s vision. The background images in these panels are photographs taken from the comfort of my truck, while the foreground layers doily-like spirals of text that are a hypnotic vortices with a mantra of “green grass” or “blue skies” that hides and interrupts the viewing of the landscape.



Inspired by the functional aesthetic of bales of hay, *Exurban: Turf Roll*, illustrates the artistry of these practical forms and a romantic view of our relationship to nature. The house is made from a kit sold for model train dioramas that comes with several options for customization, creating a faux sense of individuality. While the house looks like a storybook home with its vivid blue color, decorative curtains, and comfortable porch on a perfect lawn, its tenuous relationship to the large turf roll leaves us to wonder whether the house is, like a snail, pulling its landscape with it as it travels or if the landscape is rolling itself up, endangering the house and tossing it from its foundation.

Turf Roll, Artificial grass, wood, paint, steel, miniature houses, dimension varies [above]

Blue Skies, Etched glass, 12x24x1 inches [opposite page, above]

Greener Grass, Etched glass, 12x24x1 inches [opposite page, below]

Miyuki Akai Cook



Sabotage, Natural fibers, 20x15x2 inches

I am a wimpy challenger, a shy social butterfly, a weak and tough woman, and a physically tiny but big dreamer. Like all people, I have two sides. Because I simply want to be happy, I struggle to maintain a positive attitude and to drive toward a sincere and full-fledged life even in difficult situations. I enjoy the process of transforming familiar materials into some meaningful object and am amused watching dimensional transformation by the techniques, such as knitting, crochet, and weaving. Also, the quality of a line provides fragility that I want to express as weakness and gentleness inside of me, and I want to confirm that fragile materials can become solid objects. I also like to understand the characteristics of materials and to use them effectively, which relates to the idea of understanding and accepting myself. I see my technique as metaphor of life in which time never stop. Also every second, every minute, and every day build a history of life; likewise, I form dimensions with stitches that are simple, repetitive, and sometimes dull. I love and hate my life at the same time. My artwork has led me to a better understanding of my personal identity and to a deeper appreciation for my Japanese cultural values. Since living in America, I have been feeling a conflict between American and Japanese cultural values. As a result, I think that neither cultural value is perfect. Necessity of balance is not only between cultures but also on a personal level, and I strive to find a balance between cultural values, relationships, and myself.

Miyuki Akai Cook was born and raised in Japan. She has always enjoyed creativities since she can remember, such as drawing, painting, and paper cutting, then her mother introduced sewing, knitting, crocheting. It was very natural for Miyuki to pursue art as her career.

She attended Seian Woman's college in Kyoto for a year to study textile, which was the first experience she dyed fabric. She earned BFA in Interior Design from Osaka University of Arts in Japan. In 2000 Miyuki took a journey to the U.S. to explore a different culture. She re-discovered an interest in textile while she was studying at University of North Texas. In 2006 she received MFA in Fiber/ Artisanry from University of Massachusetts- Dartmouth.

She has been passionate for education and currently teaching at Marshall University, West Virginia. Her visual inspiration and aesthetic are often from Japanese heritage. She calls herself a "maker" because her curious and adventurous personality let her to use various techniques and materials for different purposes. As a mother and educator, she concerns about young generation. In her artwork she express our coexistence and dilemma caught between human society and nature's gift of life.

<https://miyukiakai.wixsite.com/artist>



Salvage, Mixed media fiber quilt, 34x34 inches [above]

Buried, Double woven natural fabric, aluminum, 60x22x6 inches [opposite page]





Sonya Yong James

I am a multidisciplinary artist that works with thread and cloth as I love the references that they hold such as mending, repairing and connecting. This ubiquitous material is central to the human experience. Cloth is always touching us. I am intrigued by the idea of a single thread becoming warp and weft and forming something whole. My frequent use of wool felt is primordial. Felt feels like something that exists in nature. Felt has the gravitas of a raw material, such as wood and stone. Felt is disorderly and full of trapped energy.

My current work speaks to my fascination and reverence for the natural world. I am most interested in narratives that speak to collectively shared mythologies and folk tales. These once familiar stories are then fragmented and conflated with another to form new clusters of meaning and association. Textiles are also the instruments of both female domestic culture and universal production. I seek to join together the points where these stories and systems overlap and where sources of sexuality, memory, and death construct meaningful relationships and dialogue.

Sonya Yong James (b. Knoxville, Tennessee) lives and works in Atlanta, Georgia. She received a BFA in Printmaking from Georgia State University where she focused on etching and sculpture. James has exhibited nationally and internationally for the past twenty years and has been the recipient of several grants, awards, and residencies. She has most recently received the Artadia Award in 2019.

Her work is held in numerous corporate and private collections including Art in Embassies in Mauritania, Africa. James has been exhibited in galleries and museums locally such as MOCA GA, Atlanta Contemporary, Ogden Museum of Southern Art, Albany Museum of Art, and the Zuckerman Museum of Art. She has just completed a four year residency at the Studio Artists Program at Atlanta Contemporary and is represented by Whitespace Gallery.

www.sonyayongjames.com

Nothing Gold Can Stay, Horse hair, 18x192 inches [opposite page, above]

Free Animal, Horse Hair, 67x59x6 inches [opposite page, below]





Prayer, Mixed media, 125x2.5x2.5 inches [opposite page, above]

Home, Mixed media, 32x16x11.5 inches [above]

Meena Khalili

What I know of my Persian family exists in the stories told to me by my father. It has been said as we tell and retell stories, the stories themselves change. My father's stories alter slightly with each retelling, just as they have as I have retold them. This work is an experiment to manifest an aural and visual shift with cultural loss through translation and dissipation in mind. Considering how an analogue telephone line could act as a corrosive agent, I called my father and asked him to tell me a story. He obliged and told me a short story about my grandfather, Mohammad, a man I never met. After our conversation, I filtered his story through the telephone line fifteen consecutive times and the sound of my father's voice eroded considerably. The sound evolved as his story became incoherent. After the fifteenth iteration, it was recognizable only as a kind of symphony of acoustic oscillation. This chador— the head and body covering worn by Iranian women—is an experiment in response to this story. Upon wearing the cloth out into the rain, the letters forming the story dissolve on the fabric resulting in a sort of erosion of type. In the places where the chador folded over upon itself, text transferred onto text, which fragmented the type and produced a slow breaking down of the story. In the places where rain hit the heaviest, the type began to fade. Here we see the aural story erode, transfer, and transform.

Meena Khalili is a professor of design and interaction, who makes daily drawings of things. She is an artist who uses design as a strategy for creation, and a designer who brings artistic methods to her solutions. Her interdisciplinary research moves between traditional design and studio art practices and explores UX, storytelling, typography, and language through design, illustration, moving image, and book art. Much of her research takes inspiration from her experience as an Iranian-American. A native of Washington, D.C. and Assistant Professor at the University of South Carolina School of Visual Art + Design, Meena holds a BFA in Illustration and an MFA in Visual Communication + Graphic Design from VCUarts and completed study at the Illustration Academy, and the LdM Institute in Florence, Italy. She is the Co-Chair of the National AIGA Design Educators Community Steering Committee. In addition to international exhibitions, she maintains an active speaking engagements and workshops in the U.S., and internationally, most recently in Hong Kong, Doha, and Venice. She is recipient of the National Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement in Graphic Design by the SouthEastern College Art Conference. Her work has shown at the Type Director's Club of New York, Chicago Design Museum, and galleries throughout North America, Canada, China, Indonesia, Croatia, Australia, and Moscow, with illustrations and book art in permanent collections at the VCU Libraries Special Collections and Archives, the Omni Hotel Louisville, and the Library of Congress.



I am the daughter of an Iranian and an American, and a citizen of both countries. Two distinctly separate nations, each of which harbors suspicions of the other. Living in a Western culture, I have experienced the slow dissolution of my Middle Eastern heritage. I see entropy as a metaphor for this dissolution. I have struggled to maintain my Iranian roots and find I am losing my grip on the threads of a culture passed down from generations.

The child of an immigrant, I have established a sense of peace in what it means to be an outsider. The works I create are a record of my experience. These drawings become a journal of discovering new people and places. The series New in LOU 365 was my record of Louisville as a new transplant. My drawings reflect an intimate daily ritual of discovery in hopes of capturing the life of a city by using pen, ink and collage processes in small accordion fold books. I travel with my sketchbooks and tools on a mission to create images with a pulse, which exude the experience of my surroundings. As a first-generation Iranian American, my fascination with geography, impermanence, history and translation informs my work.

Collage is used throughout this work to develop a narrative between text and image for the viewer. I find this most appropriate as the city itself is a collage of sounds, images, billboards, historical sites and churches. Thus, a “text”-ural history is incorporated into the process of image creation; most of the papers used are found in antique shops in the Louisville metro area, and many of them date from the 1800’s to the mid-20th century, a time of developing industry and growth of the river city’s economy.

Why is it important to document Louisville?

As an artist and designer, I am compelled to organize, archive and record. The city of Louisville is a living organism, not unlike other cities across America. Prosperity can engender displacement; some of the businesses archived in the project were closed down by the project’s final day, and some spaces revitalized and opened with new life. Even the unique signage of the city speaks to Louisville’s collective vibrant eclecticism. These works on paper pause time briefly as they encapsulate and protect a moment in a city observed through the lens of a curious newcomer.

<https://www.meenakhalili.com/about>

New in Lou No. 5, Accordion fold book, pen, ink, collage [opposite page, above]

My Grandfather and the Ravine, Artist’s portrait wearing chador [previous page, opposite page below - detail]



was a ravine going through this land, way down. It was really deep and he built a house on this property. He made a bath in the ravine that goes through the house. From his bedroom he would come out, two steps out, every morning at five. He used to come get of bed. He would go down the stairs - sixty of them - every morning. Down where the water was the temperature, I would say, was probably about seventy to seventy-five degrees all year long. He would take his bath there. He didn't believe in public baths so that was his personal bath. Every morning that was his thing. Five-thirty. By six he was ready to go to work. So, that was basically his exercise. I always wondered, why? Then, I realized. Every year in the winter he would get a kind of cold and it would settle -- some kind of pneumonia in his system. Eventually, he passed away from pneumonia because he didn't believe in drying his hair or anything in the winter time. There was no hair dryer or anything. But, the way he was. The old man was raised to do the hard work and that was his exercise and his whole life being. I can not remember him not going down there to take his bath in the morning. Whether sick or healthy, he did that every waking day.

I use my practice to explore where we are from and examine how place grounds our experience. As a Half-Chinese queer woman who grew up in Washington before moving to Tennessee, I have spent a lot of time feeling displaced. When I participated in the Fire Island Artist Residency in 2017, being in a place where my sexuality felt normal made me question my interest in belonging. While I had thought I was missing a sense of home from moving across the country, I realized that much of this void resulted from the lack of a diverse community.

My paintings range from conceptual and formal concerns to more intimate and personal narratives, while examining an elusive feeling of home by using objects and spaces that resonate undeniably: worn-out shoes and patterned tablecloths become vessels for memory and comfort. I incorporate photographic matte-medium transfers into my paintings as well. These skin-like, slightly nuanced multiples create irregular patterns that frame the image and contrast colorful, painted areas. While I am receptive to each painting's inner logic, I also implement rules, listening to particular songs on repeat or using written notes or diagrams instead of reference photographs. I hope that this melding of abstraction and figuration opens the work up to a more fluid interpretation of contemporary domestic spaces.

Marta Lee (b. Moscow, ID) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She received her BFA from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and an MFA from the University of Texas at Austin. She has participated in Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT), Fire Island Artist Residency (Cherry Grove, NY), a UT Exchange fellowship at the Royal College of Art Sculpture Programme (London, UK), an Artist-in-Residence Fellowship at Anderson Ranch Arts Center (Snowmass Village, CO), and a Guest Residency at Hercules Art Studio Program (TriBeCa, NY). Lee has exhibited nationally and internationally in Chicago, LA, Austin, New York, London, and Shenzhen, and had a recent solo exhibition at Geary Contemporary in Millerton, NY. She also works collaboratively with Anika Steppe under the moniker Frances Brady.

<https://www.martaleeart.com/>

Eat your Rice, Mixed media, 12x10 inches [opposite page]

Marta Lee





Translation, Mixed media, 12 x 12 inches [above]

Pool House, Mixed media, 15 x 15 inches [opposite page]



“To be defined is to be confined”

As a first-generation Vietnamese American visual artist and physician, my work is an exploration into various aspects of identity, how memories shape our view of the world, and how vulnerability brings truth to the human experience. Living in constant duality, my work reflects how I bring all these aspects into my visual storytelling. Whether through cultural portraits, abstraction, or multi-layered installations, I use color, movement, and various mediums to create intrigue and discovery while addressing social, political, and cultural issues. With honest intensity and dialogue, I try to challenge every notion of what defines us and what keeps us hungry while continuing to grow my artistic voice.

Vy Ngo is an Austin, Texas based visual artist, who draws influences from her life as a Vietnamese-American, a physician, mother, and observer of the human condition. Born in 1975 to refugee parents in rural Pennsylvania, her passion for the arts was overshadowed by cultural expectations, an interest in the sciences, and the desire to serve others. After establishing a career in medicine, Vy finally came back to her creative self and began painting in 2015.

Her prolific and dedicated studio practice has led to solo exhibitions and group shows in various public art spaces and galleries, as well as awards such as the People’s Choice, in which one of her pieces was acquired for the City of Austin’s permanent collection. Her work has drawn attention from various publications and media, such as *Tribeza* and *Arts in Context*. Whether it be representational work to create a dialogue about identity, culture, and political issues, or abstract and conceptual work based on memories, neuroscience and human emotions, her body of work is as diverse as her life.

<http://vyngostudio.com>

Playing the Part, Oil on canvas, 48x60 inches [opposite page]



Vy Ngo



Hand Me Downs, Oil on canvas, 48x60 inches [above]

Two Sides to Face, Oil on canvas, 48x48 inches [opposite page]



Elena Øhlander

My work focuses on the subtleties of the human condition and conceptually explores identity, individuality, and gender issues through creative visual narrative. I utilize a contrived scenario, characterization of my own likeness, intentional use of semiotics, and the psychology of color to build my vernacular.

Hyphenated-American identity is a theme explored within the bodies of work as a comparative cultural lens that focuses on asian diaspora awareness and unification. The protagonist in my work takes viewers on a journey into my imagination through gesture, expression, and environment to reveal the many facets of my inner life. My goal is to inspire the viewer to breakdown stereotypes and to look beyond the boundaries of their culture and identity for introspection. Rather than emphasizing what separates us as individuals - I hope to inspire understanding, mindfulness and connection in what unifies us to society at large.

Elena Øhlander (b. 1988) is a visual artist working in the medium of Mixed Media Illustration and Mural-making, currently working and residing in Jacksonville, Florida. She attained her BFA in Photography from The Art Institute in 2014, exhibiting her work at national galleries and museums.

Her focus is in illustration that explores identity, gender issues, space, individuality and pop culture. Her main influences are Taiyo Matsumoto, Hayao Miyazaki, Yayoi Kusama, and Yoshitomo Nara.

<http://www.elenaohlander.com/>

Gishin Anki, Mixed media, 24x30 inches [opposite page]
Nekokaburi, Oil on canvas, 48x48 inches [next page left]
Toxic Wuhan, Oil on canvas, 8x10 inches [next page right]



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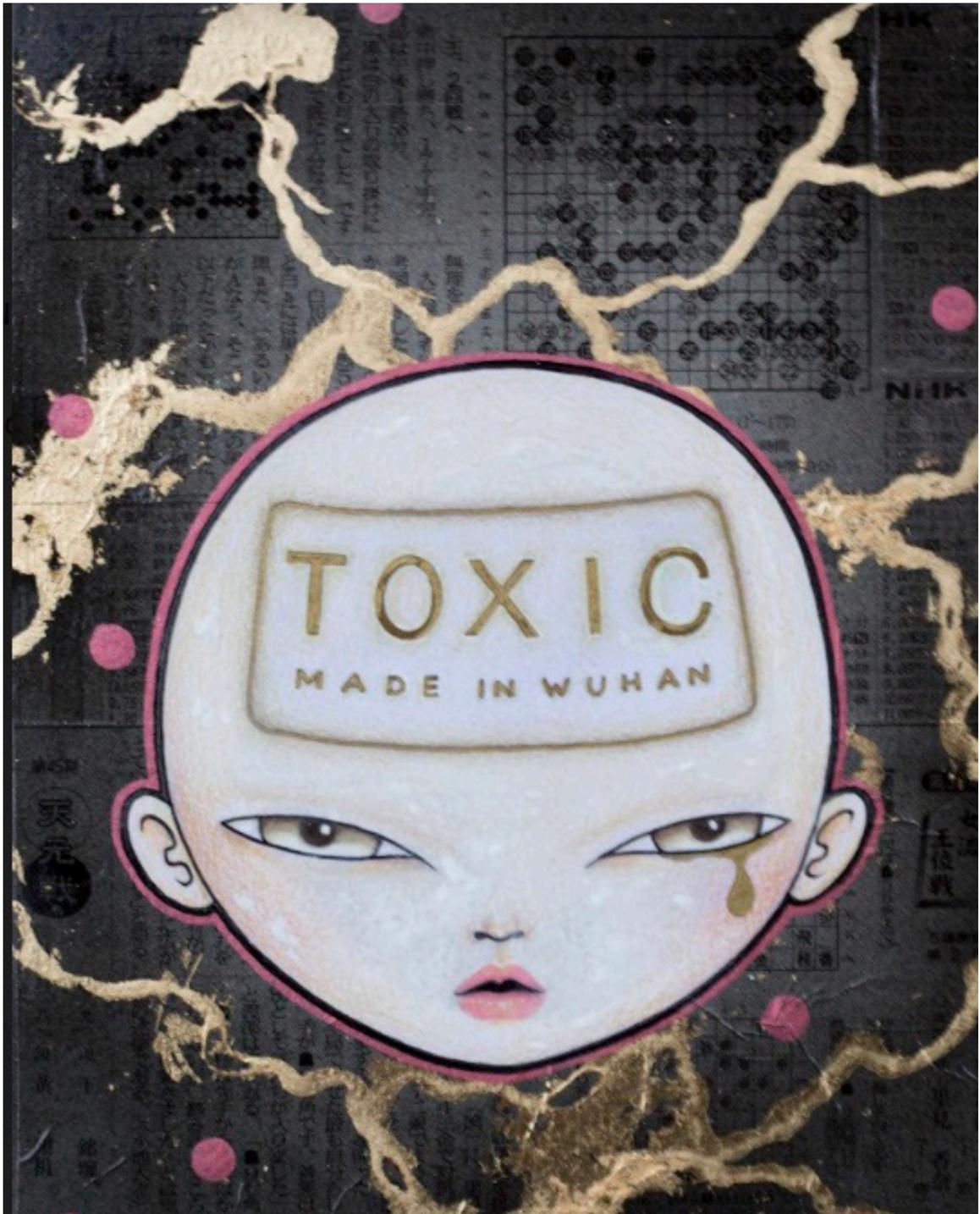


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Sisavanh Phouthavong

The *Transparent Voices* installation comprises of refugee photos printed on semi-transparent fabric and sewn together with a single gold thread and suspended from the ceiling. Fake marigolds are a simulacrum of what was and what life can be after the war. Sticky rice bags are the heart of the Laotian culture and the tent-like structure is an open-ended shelter. Refugees and immigrants are visible and invisible in their community and so the single gold thread symbolizes endurance, beauty, fragility, and sustainability in the Southeast Asian culture. This piece speaks about the future we faced after escaping our home country and leaving the refugee camps. So many of stories of hardship are lost in the winds. This traumatic event was part of my childhood development and defined my identity. My work addresses the issues of displacement and how landscapes can define cultural identity. I am putting together a story that weaves visual imagery, sensory experiences, and personal memories to recreate a flux moment.

Sisavanh Phouthavong is a Lao American visual artist born in Vientiane, Laos, in 1976. Her artwork has been exhibited nationally at venues including Asian Arts Initiative, Hunter Museum of American Art, Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, Huntsville Museum of Art, and the Reece Museum. Her refugee and immigrant experience inspire Phouthavong's current work and to raise awareness of the Secret War on Laos. Phouthavong earned her BFA from the University of Kansas and her MFA at Southern Illinois University of Carbondale, IL. She is a recipient of the 2017 Tennessee Arts Individual Artist Fellowship for 2D and the 2019 Artfield's winner for painting. Sisavanh lives and works at Murfreesboro, Tennessee as a Professor of Painting at Middle Tennessee State University. Through her artwork, she confronts the challenges of bicultural memory and documentation. She considers abstract and concrete notions for those who must remember both their inner and external histories in a diaspora framed by secrecy and loss. Her work probes what is shared, what is felt, and what must remain deeply personal among the lessons passes on to the next generation as it heals and rebuilds.

<https://www.sisavanhphouthavong.com>

Transparent Voices II, Digital print on fiber, rice, silk flowers, 72x132 inches [opposite page]

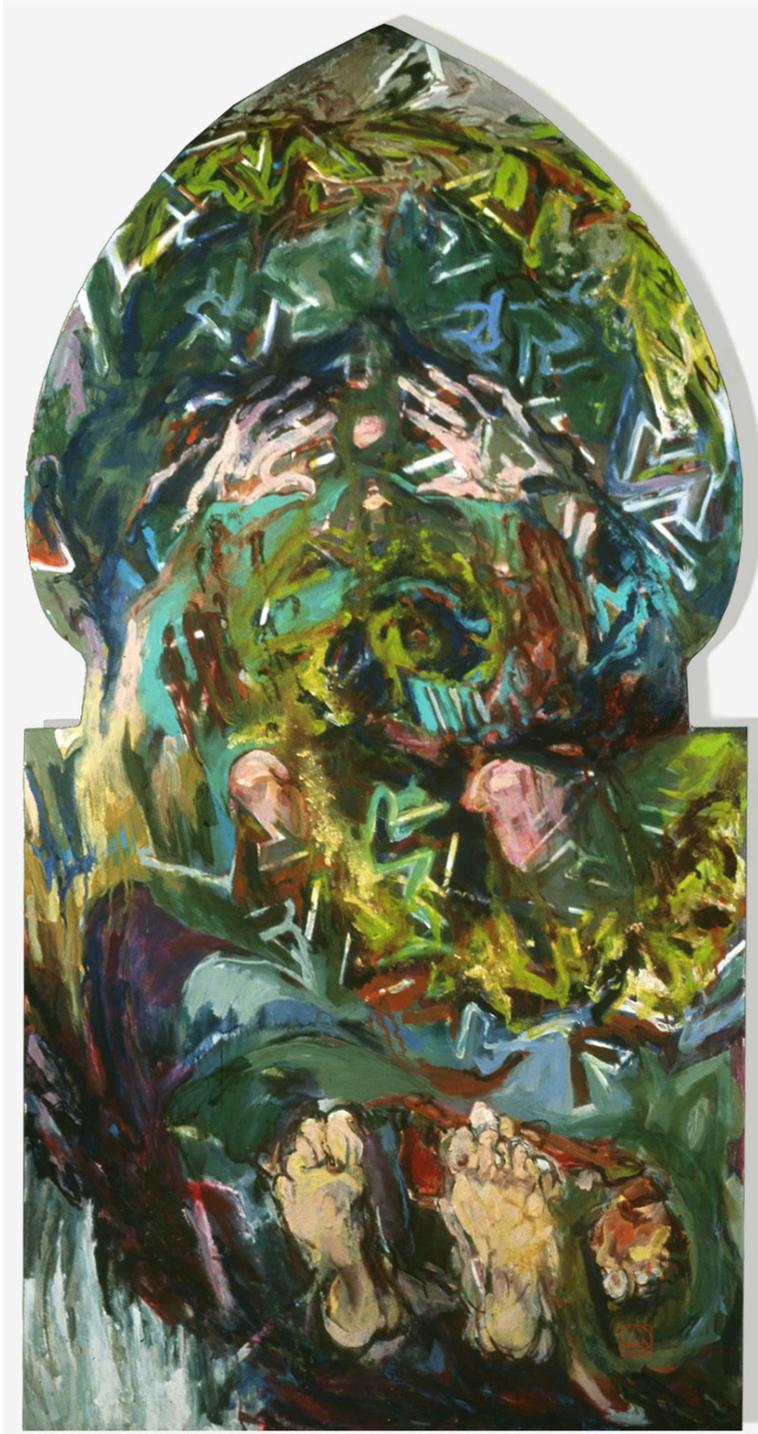




Displacement Series was created to observe how the Laotian immigrants assimilated into American culture legally by changing their Laotian names to American names through American Citizenship—influenced by Pop Artist Roy Lichtenstein. The portrait's stylization indicated the loss of the culture, but the individual Ben Day Dots painted by hand humanized and individualized the subject matter.

Transparent Voices II, Digital print on fiber, rice, silk flowers, 72x132 inches [opposite page, detail]
Displacement Series: Sandra, Bonita, Melinda, Mixed media, 24x36 inches each [above left to right]

Halide Salam



Mine is an American story; the proverbial story of a painter driven by an “insurmountable force” an unhealable rift that drives each painting while exploring space, light and cultural environment. The ‘force’ is the invisible umbilical cord that ties me to my childhood experiences from which I can never sever off but which seeks to connect to the new environments of choice. It is this cord that accompanies me when I paint. The vast American art environment stimulates my feelings with a renewed understanding about my spiritual and ritual connection to land, space and light; and although my work stems from the experiential it is not referential. Nature is where I feel comforted. The Mountains, the Mesas, the Desert and the Night sky, they become metaphors that speak to my sense of loss but also to my moments of renewal. As long as I can remember, I have always been interested in the properties of space. Not as an empty space for something to qualify it but as something alive which when pushed around determines the forms in it. Without space, forms cannot materialize. In that sense, space is a living thing, inviting something to be put in it. My interest in experiencing this infinite Space goes back to when as a child, I drew on the sand, and the endless beach was incalculable like the universe. As I paint, Time interacts, fluctuating and tying the physical spaces to memory, the imagination, ancient rituals and patterned structures. It is this ‘force’ that connects me to my identity. My work as a painter is the ground where I investigate with a Dhikr-like-intuition. Geometry structures my investigation; intuition pushes me into time-zones of solace.

Halide Salam fled a war-torn country to come to the United States. She is an Asian-American, contemporary painter of Displacement/Placement. Her work speaks to the all-American story of migration, separation and integration. The narrative of her paintings is the reconciliation of divisions, identities, and language. It is a lucid image of the world of experiences and emotions in search of peace and serenity not found within the confines of everyday living yet finding moments of rest within the struggle. Halide Salam received her MA in Painting from New Mexico Highlands University, and PhD in Fine Arts from Texas Tech University She has numerous solo and juried group exhibitions in national and international galleries and museums, winning many awards. num awards Her paintings are in collections nationwide and overseas and was selected to exhibit in the US Embassy in Mauretania as part of the US Art in Embassies Program. Coming from the schools of sacred geometry and contemporary aniconic art, Halide finds connections with nature, life experiences and sacred texts. Her book *Between 2 Spaces: Reflections on the Spiritual in Art*, was nominated for the 2008 National Book Award in non-fiction.

<https://halidesalam.com/>

Adoration III, Oil on canvas, 72x30 inches [opposite page]

Flagellation, Mixed media collage, bullet casing [next page]



In Adoration, which dates back to the 1990's, I rely on Dhikr – the remembering faculty – an induced memory-state of mind – to comprehend signs that may interface with inner vision and knowledge. Dhikr is a continuing remembrance of the Creator. It is a tool through which I utilize the processes of self-disclosure and vision to enter concealed realms of the mind to envision oneness. This method of remembering – a sort of modus operandi – leads me to draw on intimate practices, traditions, events, and objects from the realm of the sensory, the imaginal and the supra sensory. TransPlace 9 - Chasing the Moon is from my most current series. An organic Geometry, more specifically the helix spiral is used to explore concepts of faith and longing. The elements line and script that I explore in my earlier works interact and coexist in TransPlace - line as time-travel and script as stairways. I paint within around and through these painted spaces tying the stories of my forbearers to rituals and memories, and to undiscovered places within to make meaning of the world outside.

TitleWithheld, Voices, Flag_ellation

In these works, I explore identity, land, and cultural environment in which, objects, symbols, and identities morph in space, fragmenting and reconstructing to ask questions of what we think we know, and withhold questions and definitions regarding what is or could be. In TitleWithheld, I am examining a familiar icon – the American flag by layering narratives of paint and color to speak for our contemporary history and to raise questions. This series was started in 2002 through 2009 and revisited in 2016. By deliberately withholding the title, the visual politics of this series remain unspoken. It is a personal dialogue not only with artists who have used the iconic figure of the flag but also with current social and political issues. Flag_ellation is a more direct confrontation with the world of media, bias, symbols and identities. By reconstructing, blending, transforming and remaking opinionated imagery in order to explore and question related meaning, I hope to stir and awaken the contemporary heart. In Silent Voices, complex themes like identity, struggle, tragedy juggle together to exist. Images that arise are at times specific, and at other times visual metaphors moving within their own rhythmic time and place. The crouching figure is a universal metaphor for all the voices caught in the turmoil of conflict and change. The crouching figure is a 1980's image, renewed and transformed from representational images to abstracted ones – rising like a phoenix from the ashes of 'tyranny.' It speaks for all the voices silenced, and for the ones demanding to exist with the same human rights enjoyed by dominant societies. There is a quietness that exudes when confrontation ends. The space is pregnant with unanswered voices. Here my search is to create a field of forms that can resonate on a universal level. Voices asked for a tight space. For the viewer to be up close and in the work itself... where the peripheral and frontal vision is the whole field to view all the sounds generated by the paintings, simultaneously.



Beizar Aradini



Sisavanh Phoutavong



Leticia Bajuyo



Halide Salam

PANEL on WOMEN



Deirdre de la Cruz is Director of the Doctoral Program in Anthropology and History, and Associate Professor of History and Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Michigan. She is an historian and cultural anthropologist of the Philippines, with an interest in the transformation of religious sensibilities, beliefs, and phenomena in modernity. Specifically, her work examines different varieties of Filipino Christianity through their material, textual, and technological mediations. She is the author of the book *Mother Figured: Marian Apparitions and the Making of a Filipino Universal* (University of Chicago Press, 2015), and several articles on religion in the Philippines. Her current projects include a scholarly book on the history

of faith healing in the Philippines, an edited volume on religious diversity in the Philippines, and two plays, one on the legacies of Fili on religious diversity in the Philippines, and two plays, one on the legacies of Filipinos who fought in WWII, and another that tells the history of Christianity through the eyes of its apostates. She lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with her son, Kai, her partner, Orlando de Guzman, and a small family of cats.



Kreneshia Whiteside, Panelist and Artists' Studio Visit Facilitator



José Ardivilla, Panel Moderator

ARTISTS' STUDIO VISITS



Marta Lee



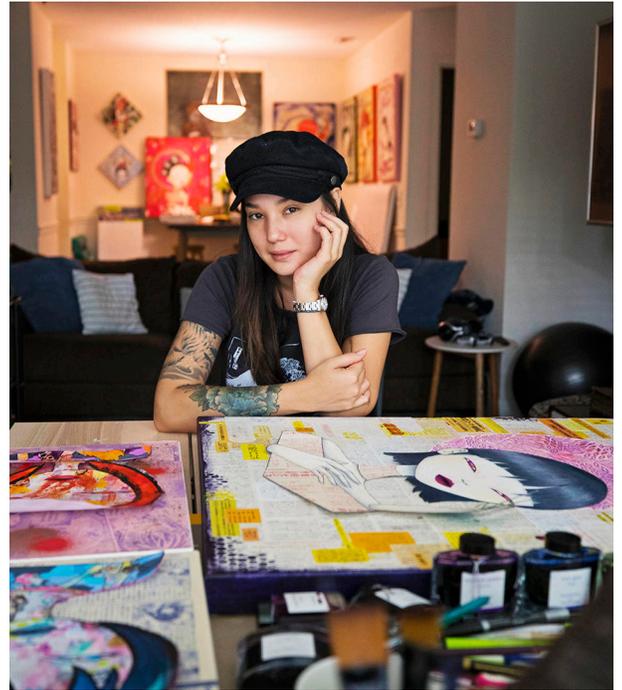
Miyuki Akai Cook



Vy Ngo



Meena Khalili



Elena Øhlander



Sonya Yong James

Department of Art & Design

The **Department of Art & Design** provides comprehensive training in the visual arts and art history. The students develop problem solving skills, a strong work ethic, and an ability to communicate verbally and visually through their time with us. Alumni from our program are thriving in various careers in the arts. Art & Design faculty includes internationally exhibited artists, published authors, and Guggenheim Fellows. Affiliated with Mary B. Martin School of the Arts, which sponsors an eclectic calendar of visiting artists, curators, art historians, and exhibitions at ETSU and the regional communities.

The facilities are comprehensive, with materials and spaces for Graphic Design, Fibers, Painting, Printmaking, Ceramics, Drawing, Jewelry & Metals, Sculpture, Analog and Digital Photography, and Extended Media. The studio areas are well equipped with an array of tools and larger equipment. The department houses two Mac labs for use by Art & Design students, as well as several Smart classrooms. Regularly updated software includes Adobe Creative Suite and more. Digital cameras are available for check out by registered art students; students also have access to a variety of large format digital printers and scanners available in our Visual Resource Center. Individual studio spaces are available for graduate students as well as undergraduate students working on capstone exhibitions. There are wonderful galleries on campus, Slocumb Galleries, and a satellite gallery in downtown Johnson City, Tipton Gallery, where we host diversity exhibitions by students, visiting artists, faculty, and more.

We offer the following degrees at ETSU:

Master of Fine Arts (Studio Art) M.F.A.

Bachelor of Fine Arts (Studio Art) B.F.A. or Bachelor of Fine Arts (Graphic Design) B.F.A.

Bachelor of Arts (Art History) B.A. or Bachelor of Arts (Studio Art) B.A.

Bachelor of Arts (Studio Art) B.A. with a minor in Education*

Minor (Studio Art) or Minor (Art History)

*Our partnership with ETSU College of Education enables our students to be eligible to teach K-12

The Department of Art & Design is accredited by NASAD, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design and is a member of CAA, the College Art Association; SECAC, Southeastern College Art Conference; ISC, the International Sculpture Center, and is a consortium member of SACI, Studio Art Centers International, based in Florence, Italy. Study abroad opportunities are available to ETSU students; the Ceramics program offers summer workshops in Spannochia, Italy.

Mira Gerard, Professor and Chair, Department of Art & Design

etsu.edu/cas/art

ETSU Tipton & Slocumb Galleries

The Slocumb Galleries are educational exhibition venues of the Department of Art & Design under the College of Arts and Sciences at East Tennessee State University.

Our Mission is to develop creative excellence, foster collaborations, promote inclusivity and encourage critical thinking by providing access to and serving as inclusive platforms for innovative ideas and diverse exhibitions. The Slocumb Galleries promote the understanding, presentation and appreciation of contemporary art in support of the academic experiences and the cultural development of the region, through collaborative programming with various units and communities.

Named after Prof. Elizabeth Slocumb, an art teacher at ETSU (then, East TN Normal School in 1911) and first Chair of the Department of Art & Design. The galleries' mission is to develop creative excellence, foster interdisciplinary collaborations, promote inclusivity and encourage critical thinking by providing access and platform for innovative ideas and diverse exhibitions.

The Slocumb Galleries features Visiting Artists' Exhibitions and Lecture series, curated/juried exhibitions, and MFA / BFA / BA student exhibitions. The Tipton Gallery, initially served as student exhibition space, organizes art events during JC Downtown's First Fridays and Festivals. The exhibitions, art educational programming and community engagement activities promote artistically diverse, socially relevant and thought provoking work that encourages critical discourse. The annual National Juried Art Exhibition features emerging, and nationally renowned US contemporary artists who employ diverse media and innovative techniques that contribute to the evolving forms of American art. Artists and renowned curators from prestigious institutions serve as Jurors, as it contributes to the academic and regional communities' exposure and appreciation of current practices in contemporary art.

The Slocumb Galleries' programming is supported by the Tennessee Arts Commission grants, East Tennessee Foundation and ETSU Student Activities Allocation Committee. As member of the Tennesseans for the Arts and the Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM), it received the TAM 2020 Award of Recognition for *Diverse & Empowered Exhibition Series* and Award of Commendation for the *Catalogue Exhibitions*.

etsu.edu/cas/art/galleries

ETSU ART & DESIGN and
TIPTON & SLOCUMB GALLERIES

Tennessee Arts Commission (TAC)

The Tennessee Arts Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly with the special mandate to stimulate and encourage the presentation of the visual, literary, music and performing arts and to encourage public interest in the cultural heritage of Tennessee.

The mission of the Tennessee Arts Commission is to cultivate the arts for the benefit of all Tennesseans and their communities.

Through a variety of investments, the Commission encourages excellence in artistic expression through the state's artists, arts organizations and arts activities. That commitment has expanded through the years to increase access and opportunities for all citizens to participate in the arts. The Tennessee Arts Commission builds better communities by:

- Investing in Tennessee's nonprofit arts industry to enhance cultural life
- Serving citizens, artists and arts and cultural organizations
- Supporting arts education to increase student outcomes
- Undertaking initiatives that address public needs through the arts

tnartscommission.org/art-grants/

Arts Build Communities (ABC) Grant

The Arts Build Communities (ABC) grant program from the Tennessee Arts Commission is designed to provide support for arts projects that broaden access to arts experiences, address community quality of life issues through the arts experiences, offer arts programs that are designed to help affect positive change in community social issues, develop arts programming that strengthens social networks through community engagement, and undertake cultural arts initiatives that enhance a community's identity and/or economic development. The ABC Grant for Washington County is managed by the First Tennessee Development District.

tnartscommission.org/art-grants/

Arts Project Support (APS) Grant

Support for arts projects and activities across all disciplines that focus on community vitality and engagement in urban counties. Proposed arts projects must involve one or more Commission recognized art forms, including: visual arts, craft, media, design, music, theater, dance, folk and ethnic, or literary arts. The following are example activities and expenditures that are consistent with the funding philosophy for APS & RAPS:

- Projects that involve and promote professional artists, especially Tennessee artists
- Visiting artists conducting master classes
- Specific aspects of workshops, festivals, and conferences
- Public performances, productions, and exhibitions produced by the applicant
- Exhibitions of art by professional and folk artists, especially Tennessee artists
- Projects involving and promoting folk and traditional artists
- Promotion, publicity, and newsletters or Administrative and artistic staff support
- Research and documentation as part of an arts project or program development
- Consultancies and residencies for administrative and artistic activities
- The development of long-range planning documents
- Improved program accessibility for underserved constituencies, e.g. children, people living in rural communities or isolated settings, people with living with disabilities, people of color, and senior citizens
- Art in public places
- Extensions of literary projects, journals with continuing publication, or juried anthologies
- Apprenticeship programs or Computer software/training
- Technical/production support or Technical assistance projects
- Touring/presenting projects that bring professional and/or traditional folk performers to communities across the state

<https://tnartscommission.org/grants/arts-project-supportrural-arts-project-support/>

ETSU Student Activities Allocation Committee (SAAC)

Student organizations and university departments which provide significant benefits to the entire student body are eligible to apply for funding to support student activities and services.

<https://www.etsu.edu/students/currentstudents/studentactivityfunding.php>

Africana Studies Program

Africana Studies is an interdisciplinary academic program. The cornerstones of this program are:

1. Respect for knowledge
2. Respect for others
3. Affirmation of the importance of diversity and inclusion
4. Determination to improve our society through education and service
5. Humility
6. Compassion
7. Cooperation

In the 21st century, understanding the importance of history and underrepresented groups is central to making sense of an increasingly complicated and complex world. Africana Studies serves a critical role for the College of Arts & Sciences and East Tennessee State University by offering high quality academic course offerings, superb programming, and opportunities for personal growth through service. We are a student-centered program striving to improve the student experience. We encourage dialogue between various groups and strive to represent those groups who, historically and presently, have been unable to defend themselves.

The original sin of slavery has tainted every aspect of our lives in the United States. The scourge of racial oppression has impacted all of our national culture, institutions, schools, courts, boardrooms, rural areas, urban centers, financial institutions, and politics. There are no better examples of the importance of race and ethnicity than the events of the previous twenty years. Wars and domestic strife, profound demographic changes, and the rise of right wing nationalism have reinforced the need for education, compassion, and outreach. This combined with long simmering issues, such as voter suppression, poverty, militarism, immorality, police brutality, and violence, have demonstrated the unmistakable need for high quality programming which brings people together to support the common good.

Dr. **Daryl A. Carter** is the Director of the Africana Studies, Professor of History at East Tennessee State University and newly appointed Director of the Humanities Tennessee.

<https://www.etsu.edu/afam/>

Center for Appalachian Studies & Services (CASS)

One of Tennessee's Distinguished Centers of Excellence, the mission of the Center is to promote a deeper understanding of Appalachia and to serve the region through research, education, preservation, and community engagement. The Center is part of the Department of Appalachian Studies, which offers the Bachelor of Arts in Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Country Music Studies; Minors in Environmental Studies, Appalachian Studies, Old-Time Music, and Scottish and Irish Studies; a Graduate Certificate and Masters in Appalachian Studies; a Minor and Graduate Certificate in Heritage Interpretation and Museum Studies; and a Study Abroad program in Scotland and Ireland. The Center is part of the Department of Appalachian Studies and consists of three components:

The *Regional Resources Institute (RRI)* is the administrative arm of the Center. It oversees all aspects of governance and facilitates partnerships with ETSU departments and with community organizations to promote research about and service to the Appalachian region. The Center administers long-term grant projects including the Appalachian Teaching Project and Governor's School for the Scientific Exploration of Tennessee Heritage. For more than 30 years, the RRI published *Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine*, which is soon relaunching as *Appalachian Places*, an online publication.

The *Archives of Appalachia* is one of the premier institutions that collects the written words, images, and sounds that document life in southern Appalachia. The Archives' collections contain two miles of rare manuscripts, 250,000 photographs, 90,000 audio and moving image recordings, and 14,000 books. More than 2,000 visitors from ETSU and around the globe utilize our collections each year for scholarly and creative projects. Engaging students, faculty, scholars and the community, it advances lifelong learning and cultural understanding.

The *Reece Museum* is an art and history museum with a diverse collection, including original art, prints, textiles, and artifacts. Named for U.S. Congressman B. Carroll Reece and formally dedicated in 1965, the Reece is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (one of thirteen such museums in Tennessee). It houses three galleries for temporary exhibits, along with a multipurpose space. The Reece hosts a wide range of exhibits, recent examples of which include *The World Through a Woman's Eyes*, *The Shoreline Project*, *The AIDS Quilt*, *EPIDEMIC*, *A Place for All People*, and *The Overmountain Weaver's Guild*.

- Dr. **Ron Roach**, Chair and Director, CAAS

<https://www.etsu.edu/cas/cass/>

The **Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center** seeks to promote the University's commitment of diversity, and to broadening multicultural awareness and sensitivity, and encourages cross-cultural collaborative relationships through recruitment, retention, engagement and success.

Vision: The Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center will positively affect lives by creating an environment that supports and sustains the affirmation, celebration, and understanding of human differences and similarities.

Mission: To actively promote, lead, and facilitate the University's commitment to diversity; champion the importance of diversity; provide a supportive atmosphere for students; engage the university community in intercultural dialogue; build collaborative relationships among students, faculty, staff, and the community; and overcome barriers to inclusion.

<https://www.etsu.edu/students/mcc/>

From the Director:

The **Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center** is a place where our students can discuss, appreciate, and celebrate their identities, similarities, and differences through a variety of facilitated workshops, cultural programming and academic/leadership development opportunities, while also building a sense of community and belonging. It is both a place to gather and an environment for the educational, social justice, and cultural matters that are significant to our students, faculty, staff, and the greater ETSU community.

It is my hope that by facilitating these opportunities for our students it will aid in the students having a meaningful and positive experience on our campus. Our Center is committed to providing quality culturally relevant programs and services that will promote the successful transition, persistence, and graduation of our diverse students.

I look forward to seeing you soon in the Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center or at one of our many events around campus this upcoming year.

Carshonda H. Martin

Director of the Multicultural Center and Access & Student Success

QUEST for Success is a college transition program that is designed to help underrepresented students become acclimated to campus life while building a network of friends, faculty, and staff to assist them through their college journey. The *QUEST for Success* participants will gain insight on campus life and become familiar with our academic support services. The program also provides students with an opportunity to connect with current students and meet new ones. The participants will also participate in Preview following the *QUEST for Success* Program. *QUEST for Success* seeks to increase underrepresented minority student participation in all academic opportunities involving leadership, study abroad, research, and internships thereby integrating them into the institution both academically and socially. *QUEST for Success* focuses particularly on providing students from underrepresented minority population groups at East Tennessee State University with supplemental resources and preparation that will contribute to their success in the university's academic environment and beyond. Students meet regularly throughout the year and have academic sessions on topics such as time management, study skills, career assessment, and much more! Additionally, all sessions will incorporate a collaborative effort by *QUEST for Success* staff and leaders and also various departments on campus and/or throughout the surrounding community.

<https://www.etsu.edu/students/mcc/programs/questprogram/>

Language & Culture Resource Center (LCRC)

The **LCRC's** vision is to bridge boundaries between the native English-speaking communities in East Tennessee and the non-native English speaking communities, such as the Latinx community. Our mission is to increase the awareness and understanding of diversity by involving university faculty and students in hands-on, community-based learning experiences and to bring together people from every age and background to share cultural strengths and humanity through research and outreach programs as they work toward the acculturation of the local non-native speakers of English communities. The LCRC publishes *El Nuevo Tennessean*, a bilingual newspaper in Spanish and English, and provides a bilingual Resource Guide for Washington, Unicoi, Carter, and Greene counties. The LCRC also provides translation and interpretation services as well as *English as a Second Language* classes in the community. The LCRC sponsors the annual *Corazon Latino* community festival and *Hispanic Student Day at ETSU* for high school Latinx heritage students for a one-day introduction to college life. The goal is to encourage all attendees to complete high school and teach them about options available to pursue higher education.

- Dr. **Felipe Fiuza**, Director, LCRC

<https://www.etsu.edu/cas/lcrc/about/mission.php>

Appalachian BIPOC Art Mask Makers Initiative

The **Appalachian BIPOC Mask Art Makers Initiative** is a collaborative endeavor of the Slocumb Galleries staff and Friends, volunteers who sew washable cloth masks for the Appalachian, *Black, Indigenous, People of Color* (BIPOC), and public school educators and students in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The effort started as a safety precaution for future gallery viewers, Slocumb Galleries' director Karlota Contreras-Koterbay enlisted the help of *Black Diaspora* curator Lyn Govette to make Africanx inspired masks to be distributed for free to students and communities as part of community engagement. Contreras-Koterbay also cut old shirts to make shirt yarns as ear loops for masks that *Johnson City Public Art Committee* member, and Art & Design faculty Vanessa Mayoraz coordinated. This idea has also for the Appalachian BIPOC Art Mask Makers Initiative.

The mask project has soon expanded to include Native Americans, specifically, Navajo country with the first artists volunteers: Kara Bledsoe, Lisa Jones, Page & Zephren Turner, and Sisavahn Phoutavong. In a few weeks, the target to make a few hundred masks has quadrupled in demand with the addition of the regional Latinx communities, spearheaded by Language & Culture Resource Center (LCRC) director Felipe Fiuza who was including the *mascarillas* (masks) in the health kits that he was distributing weekly at the Colombian Exchange, Scott's Farm Spanish mass and DACA; in the process enlisting his wife Brunella, and ETSU director for Sustainability Kathleen Moore in the masks' volunteer corps.

The weekly distribution for the Latinx community and the request from the University School Foundation through Kelly Foster has prompted a Facebook fundraiser to help with the purchase of materials. In three days, the target of \$400 was surpassed by overwhelming support from the Friends of Slocumb Galleries' network, with generosity from former Art & Design chair Catherine Murray, current chair Mira Gerard, faculty Sage Perrot, Alisa Lange, Richard Kortum & Theresa Markiw, Art Brown, Dan VanZant, Dan's mom Lois Miller, mother-daughter duo Sky & Laken Bridges, Muslim artist Halide Salam, Amanda Purkey, Keila Lau-Lopez, and *What's the Buzz's* Judith Hammond. The monies raised were put to good use with more fabric purchases, as well as reimbursement of thread and needles for the volunteers. We have purchased almost 100 yards of fabric, and have cut up more than 10 high-count cotton thread bed sheets for the inner layers, and more than 600 yards of elastics and shirt yarns. We anticipate to have donated at least 1,000 free masks for various communities after the end of this campaign... or we shall see if we surpass this target again.

In addition, in-kind gifts of fabric, elastics and shirts for yarn were collected from our support group, Filipinx Dr. Ruth & Edwel Granadozo, Dr. Jill & David Frazier, Art & Design fibers faculty Patricia Mink with *Art & Dine Initiative's* Jocelyn Mathewes, Misty Blue Scott, Laken Bridges, Shara Lange, Susan Lachmann and Veteran Administration's Maria Theresa Cerniauskas. All the fabrics are curated and cut in patterns by Slocumb Galleries' director & staff, and sent to volunteers for sewing, then returned back for distribution and shipping to diverse communities; often driven personally to porches in accordance with physical distancing by SG Director with help from spouse and 10-year old son Anton. Alice Salyer designed the 'Bucky the Maskot' to encourage students to wear masks on campus and the coloring book inspired by Visibility as Presence exhibitions that were distributed for free to regional K-12 public schools.

More amazing friends who are part of the volunteer corps who sew the fabrics into '*lovingly made objects of care and empowerment,*' include curator/artist Mike Calway-Fagen, Kingsport Office of Cultural Arts' former director Bonnie Macdonald, educators Cathy Walsh, Filipinx Malu Veloso-Farley and Southwest Virginia Community College art instructor & ETSU alumna Morgan Wallace Gilbert, who had voiced interests to include the 'hollar' kids of southwest Virginia in the group of beneficiaries. Art alumnae who have also come aboard as 'sewing heroes' are Taylor Norris, Queen Amber Farley, Cheyenne Good, Raina Nief, Haley Gent, Chasity Watson, Greg Smith, Raven Cordy, Samuel Hyde, Nic Blair, ETSU Diversity scholar Alex Goss, and visual resource curator Katie and husband Mike Sheffield, who are making masks for Special Education students at Sullivan County. We continuously expand with the needs, in particular, the public school teachers and students now include Greene County through educator and assistant principal Heidi Campbell; as well as the *Bert C. Bach Fine & Performing Arts* scholars under Dr. Scott Contreras-Koterbay. Thanks to Art21 artist friend John Feodorov in recommending the Torreon Community Alliance as beneficiaries in behalf of the Navajo country.

We express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all who have generously outpoured support, in materials, money, time and creative efforts in the creation of these masks as service to the Appalachian and BIPOC communities. We recognize the essential role of masks as vital to safety and prevention of more COVID outbreaks. We quote our ETSU President, Dr. Brian Noland, "*the mask is not a political statement,*" as ETSU mandates the use of masks in classrooms and public areas on campus and at events. We support and hope to contribute to the strong leadership of Dr. Noland and Johnson City Mayor Jenny Brock with the '**Mask Up JC**' program to keep our communities safe. We have also initiated Zoom and FB Live 'virtual galleries' to address access to public exhibitions and events, in lieu of physical receptions. Air purifiers are also being installed to filter air inside the galleries for additional precaution. Thank you and stay safe! We look forward to seeing you all again in person, with and eventually without masks.

WELCOME HOME

Her Liminal Asian-Appalachian Experience

January 19 to February 26, 2021, Slocumb Galleries
and February 4 to March 19, 2021, Tipton Gallery

Panel on Women: March 3, Wednesday, 6 to 8 p.m.,
Dr. Deidre dela Cruz, University of Michigan
Beizar Aradini, Leticia Bajuyo
Sisavanh Phoutavong, Dr. Halide Salam
Kreneshia Whiteside, AVA Gallery
Moderator: José Ardivilla, Fulbright Scholar, Texas Tech University
ZOOM ID 710 908 4999

Virtual Studio Visits & Mentorship
Miyuki Akai Cook,
Sonya Yong James, Marta Lee
Vy Ngo, Elena Øhlander
Facilitator: Kreneshia Whiteside, AVA Gallery

*** Events may be viewed via ETSU Slocumb Galleries'
Facebook Live and Zoom on schedule:
<https://etsu.zoom.us/my/slocumbgalleries> or Zoom ID 710 908 4999**

