



"Hollow depression interred invalid to resurgence, resistant to memory. Waits. Apel, Appellation. Excavation. Let the one who is diseuse. Diseuse de bonne aventure. Let her call forth. Let her break open the spell cast upon time upon time again and again. With her voice, penetrate earth's floor, the walls of Tartarus to circle and scratch the bowls' surface. Let the sound enter from without, the bowl's hollow its sleep. Until."

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha



Christina with Li Hongbo's Tools of Study, at Eli Klein Gallery in 2014 "Mourning is described as occupying a spatiality and temporality of ambivalence because it is not a state that one is supposed to maintain. Mourning is meant to be a temporary journey, wherein the grieving self must learn to replace a loss. Grief, when thought about in the most liberal and positivist way, can be linked to the liberal humanist process of reconciliation that is, the notion of letting go of the attachment to grief as like letting go of grievance, which is resolved through a new attachment to a proper replacement. However, as my turn to melancholia demonstrates, this replacement may be impossible, as some losses cannot ever be replaced, but rather are erased or lived as loss."

Jinah Kim

Death haunts the Asian diasporas in the Americas and across the Pacific arena. An unending tenor of mourning falls from lips to the earth's floor, vibrating with the unease of diaspora. Spat vitriol to go back to where you came from; violent pathologizations of flesh; grief processes stolen by neocolonialism. The afterlives of imperialism, war, militarism, and the remains of losses that resist evading or forgetting.

While Sigmund Freud characterizes the melancholic's attachment to the lost object as pathological and antithetical to the ego's survival, understanding melancholic attachments depathologizes them, asks the past to bear witness to the present, and reveals the eruptive potentiality of lived loss. Fred Moten theorizes sustained forms of mourning as "an insight that is manifest as a kind of magnification or intensification of the object."

Melancholia thus asks: what makes a world of new objects possible? Residing in loss or sustained mourning may be viewed as the ultimate position of defeat in the West—but what about a continued engagement with ongoing forms of loss? In mourning the wrenching loss and celebrating the life of the beloved Christina Yuna Lee and yellow femininity at large, how may loss be seen as productive rather than pathological and social rather than isolated? How might attachments reveal futurities that move away from techno-Orientalist clichés and towards an Asian-futurism?

stephanie mei huang



On Joss

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The word joss, which is now known to be a "Chinese figure of a deity," comes from Chinese Pidgin English, the Javanese dejos, from the 16c. obsolete Portuguese deos, from the Latin deus 'god,' from PIE root *dyeu-"to shine." Colloquially, it has come to mean luck.

Π.

Joss paper纸钱, or ghost money, finds its flint in traditional Chinese deity or ancestor worship ceremonies at temples and at traditional Chinese funerals and grave sites. The sheets are treated with equal parts tenderness and mundanity, each sheet tissue-thin handled with care yet in proliferation, as to engage in quotidian ancestral prayer is to introduce the divine to the domestic. They are burned as offerings to pay tribute to a bloodline as a medium for care for family, ancestors, and kin. Ancestors are offered goods alchemized by flame in reciprocation for blessings.

|||.

In 1996, I witnessed my first burning of joss paper in Suzhou, China when my great grandmother passed away from a stroke. I was two. Too precious to handle fire.

My father's father, my yaya爷爷, died on July 20, 2000. I was six. I was old enough to burn a folded silver joss paper ingot or two. Still, my father feared me getting close to the flame, but I participated in the ceremony by bowing, studiously. The monks at Jing An Temple in Shanghai prayed for yaya. Together, we bowed nine times every fifteen minutes for four hours. My father recalls I have always been reverent. We continued to burn joss paper for yaya every time we visited his graveyards in Suzhou and Qingpu. We would bring daqianmen大前门 cigarettes and yellow wine黄酒.



IV.

We have been robbed, as members of the diaspora in the West, from our grieving processes. Our grieving spaces, also, stolen. Western consciousness obfuscates and erases ancestral prayer and intimacy with the dead from daily life. Intergenerational trauma haunts. Mourning is a state of being.

V.

my father wants his ashes buried underneath the backyard pomelo tree so he can contribute to its growth

> my mother requires I bow to the Chinese Queen Mother of the West each time I return to Shanghai

the goddess sits upon an altar sometimes next to a pomelo from the backyard pomelo tree sometimes next to a melon imported from South Korea the kind that welts if you press sometimes next to temple incense from Kyoto the kind that shatters if you drop

the acupuncturist tells me to look up her thumbs remind me that the skin underneath my eyes is pliable she tells me the veins in my eyes are dull and the veins in my arms are buried deeper than they should be



VI.

On March 11, now separated from my parents and Asia three years due to pandemic, I visited Guan Di temple in Los Angeles Chinatown on North Broadway. A week ago, I left my sixth-floor apartment in Manhattan's Chinatown, just blocks from Christina Yuna Lee's sixth-floor apartment. The joss paper on the altar table beckoned my worship. I knelt on the red velvet prayer stool, three sticks of incense in hand, in reverence of Christina Yuna Lee, Michelle Go, Guiying Ma, Delaina Ashley Yaun, Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng, Hyun Jung Grant, Suncha Kim, and Soon Chung Park. I had the longest Mandarin conversation I've had in pandemic with the Vietnamese attendant through my wet face mask. I lit a spiral incense lantern at the front of the temple that will burn for four days in prayer of them. This is an eschatology of reverent intimacy and remembrance, not salvation.

VII.

It's March 12. I was oblivious that a day before I visited the temple, William Yu was stabbed ten times a block away unprovoked on North Broadway and Alpine. Law enforcement refuses to call it a hate crime.I feel an urgency to revisit my incense: to see the visible ashes of my mourning and prayer. I have been scared to go back. Chinatown is not safe. I want to be near my people. I want to believe that you are watching over the temple, that it is a space sacredly impervious to hate.

VIII.

I have wanted to offer you something of my own I can burn daily, *dyeu- to shine, wherever, Christina, yaya, my ancestors, my bloodline. I kneel to you daily. Please look after me.

stephanie mei huang



"Bronze, when it is left raw or just waxed, looks so much like wax that the feeling of its weight is bewildering. I began suspending bronze sculptures with rope to communicate its substance and relate to different parts of the human body - heart, hand, eye, gut - acting as a kind of ontological reflection. I think there is a connection between volume and spirit that I am still trying to understand in the work, and that relates to my sensation of existing in a body. The container (architecture or structure), the ephemeral or transmuting (wax), the spirit (flame), the relic (bronze) are all ways that I speak to the physicality of consciousness, via the body. The function and mystery of the living body is a space in which I find myself when making work. These candles are a concentrated version of this kind of connection, as the wax forms are changed by my presence and physical attention. The candle's "burnout" and replacement in bronze can attest to that via their absence. In a similar way, photographs always carry an absence or loss."

Kelly Akashi



In Kelly Akashi's practice, candles exist as a consistent emblem. Amidst the tragedies of 2020, this presentation of bronze sculptures emerged. In this series, Akashi casts the remnants of paraffin candles burnt to mark particular tragic events in the world: the murder of George Floyd (*May 25-27*, 2020), the explosion in Beirut (*August 4-6*, 2020), the murder of Asian women and others in Atlanta (*March 16*, 2021). She titles each bronze sculpture with the dates of its burning, shifting its temporality from the temporary to the eternal. Each candle has absorbed the affect of each tragedy, imprinting bronze with the remnants of sorrow.



August 4-6, 2020 Bronze 4.5 x 13 x 8.5 inches (11.5 x 33 x 21.5 cm)





"In 2006, Chih Lien was diagnosed with a degenerative neurological illness, multiple system atrophy and he fought the disease with his usual resolve and tenacity. He didn't allow the illness to stop his extensive travels, taking a cruise to Alaska; traveling with his daughter to Shangri-La, China; visiting his grandsons in Louisville, Kentucky; and climbing the Yellow Mountains in China with his old classmates. Chih Lien passed away at 10:40 pm on February 9, 2013, the eve of Chinese New Year, surrounded by his wife, son, and daughter singing songs and talking of his old home in Qingtian, China. We all love you, Baba, rest in peace.

Human innovation had misguided the water into holding patterns of absentmindedness. But if it is true what they say, that water has a perfect memory and always returns to where it came from, then the invocations will certainly call them back home."

Patty Chang

List of Invocations, part of Chang's Wandering Lake project, is a reflection on "medicalized death," created in the wake of her father's passing from a degenerative neurological illness. The work cites a mixed bag of physical symptoms, medical treatments, emotional reactions, and daily realities that engrave the quotidian into end-of-life experiences in the form of letter press. The form of the letterpress accentuates every individual letter, allowing invocations to be repeatedly inscribed upon paper.



ATTOCATION OF LONGING INVOCATION OF FAINTING INVOCATION OF RESTLESS SKIES INVOCATION OF A FRACTURE INVOCATION OF HUMILIATION INVOCATION OF A SHADOW INVOCATION OF INAPPROPRIATE LAUGHING OR CRYING INVOCATION OF NEDICAL DIRECTIVE INVOCATION OF WRITING WITH LIGHT INVOCATION OF EVAPORATION INVOCATION OF BUREAUCRATIC WASTE INVOCATION OF A DOUBLE HELIX INVOCATION OF DEMENTIA INVOCATION OF GRIEF INVOCATION OF ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION INVOCATION OF A FEEDING TUBE INVOCATION OF DRY BATHS INVOCATION OF VOCAL-CHORD PARALYSIS INVOCATION OF MORPHINE SUPPOSITORIES - NOISE-REDUCING HEADPHONES

List of Invocations, 2017 Letterpress 17 1/2 x 12 inches (44.5 x 30.5 cm) Edition of 50

stephanie mei huang

"white vegetable is a series of single-take 16mm films that explore the racially melancholic processes of fixation, ingestion, repulsion, and regurgitation. In Chinese, the direct translation for napa cabbage (baicai 白菜) is white vegetable. In *Melancholy and Race*, Anne Anlin Cheng remarks: "since the melancholic subject experiences resentment and denigration for the lost object with which he or she is identifying, the melancholic ends up administering to his or her own self-denigration." She continues to elaborate that "the melancholic is not melancholic because he or she has lost something but because he or she has introjected that which he or she now reviles," resulting in the melancholic "choking on...the hateful and loved thing he or she just devoured."

stephanie mei huang

In stephanie mei huang's *white vegetable i*, a napa cabbage is pictured uncannily being formed leaf by leaf. The manually superimposed 16mm image reverses the process of racial melancholic formation through generation of archive. Rather than devouring the cabbage, it finds a presumed intactness. If the napa cabbage becomes the object the melancholic fixates upon and chokes on, how might melancholic fixation reassemble from loss into object? The work alludes to Chang's *In Love (For Abramovic Love Cocteau)*, where Chang initially appears to be kissing her parents. With time, the viewer realizes the film is being played in reverse, and they share not a kiss but rather an onion from which they both eat.



white vegetable i, 2021 Digitized 16mm film single channel color video, 2'59" Edition of 7



eschatology of intimacy i, 2022 Wood block print, 23k gold leaf, mulberry paper 10 x 5 1/4 inches (25.4 x 13.3 cm) Edition of 5



Christina Yuna Lee's painting of Chinese brand Golden Bridge cigarettes, sits above an altar of cataloged offerings from the artists to Christina in the show. Christina worked at Eli Klein gallery for over four years. The painting, originally a gift to Eli, is detailed with gold leaf a mundane object made precious. Cigarettes, too, are often offered to the dead in paying respects.

In dialoguing with the work, huang created a joss paper of daqianmen cigarettes, huang's grandfather's favorite cigarettes, as an offering to Christina.

Golden Bridge for Eli Klein, 2014 Acrylic and gold leaf on canvas 10 x 8 inches (25.5 x 20.5 cm)





"During these times, because the experiences that we're going through are completely new, I think that the language we are equipped with is sometimes just not enough. So, I wanted to hone in on the idea how, as our lives are sort of expanding into this sort of new era, there's a lot of adjustment that needs to happen. But I also do think that language needs to expand with that."

Maia Ruth lee



Upon moving to Colorado from New York in the Spring of 2020, Maia Ruth Lee created a body of work, *Language of Grief*, a language for the unspeakable upheaval of that year. The *Language of Grief* paintings reflect Lee's turn to asemic writing - text that is visually seen, but which has no context. Deconstructed vintage sewing patterns are applied with India ink onto canvas—patterns that are made illegible yet ready for reconstruction. *Language of Grief 04* and *06* suggest the failure of existing language and propose new ways of assembling meaning.





Installation view Maria Ruth Lee: *The Language of Grief* Museum of Comtemporary Art Denver Denver, Colorado



Language of Grief 04, 2021 India ink on raw canvas 65 x 45 inches (165 x 114 cm)



Language of Grief 06, 2021 India ink on raw canvas 65 x 45 inches (165 x 114 cm)



"In the foraged clay, because it has a lot of fine rocks and sand, different things that make it a little tougher, it survives pit firing and raku much better because it's able to withstand the heat stress. Asian ceramics, a lot of their early glazes were plant-ash based. Whereas Egyptian ceramics were silica-based because they have a lot of sand. What I love is returning to how materials speak to place and culture and histories of trade. When you're digging [earth] out of a hillside, then you're like, 'I got this at Mount Wilson, which just barely missed being burned down by wildfires.' How does this connect to thinking about settler colonialism or ecological disasters and our human-created climate change and all these different questions that can come up?"

Candice Lin



This work emerges from multiple ceramic sculptures of amphibious animals connected to Candice's recent projects at Prospect New Orleans and the Louisiana State University Museum of Art. Those works had a number of points of departure—one being research around Saint Malo, the site of what is believed to be the first Asian American settlement in the United States, which was also inhabited by Indigenous peoples and enslaved maroons. Lin's work has repeatedly touched on how race has historically been constructed through the language of animality. Through making frogs, lizards, and alligators in clay, she memorializes the marginalized histories of Saint Malo (as well as the separate, wider use of "coolie" labor in the American South) and develops this idea of amphibiousness—existing between two worlds—as a deeper metaphor.





Untitled, 2021 Raku fired ceramics 4.5 x 5.5 x 3 inches (11.5 x 14 x 7.5 cm)


"A samurai sword on the wall of an evil mastermind's office. A home decorated with Buddha statues. A blonde woman in a cheongsam. A speculative cityscape punctuated with prominent signage in Arabic. What does it mean when so many white filmmakers envision futures inflected by Asian culture, but devoid of actual Asian people? Asian futures, without Asians is a visual analysis of over half a century of American science fiction cinema. A multipart research project, it draws from the histories of art, architecture, design, fashion, film, food, and weaponry."

Astria Suparak

Astria Suparak's *For Ornamental Purposes*, from her body of work Asian futures, without Asians, treats the motif of a koi fish in three looped video iterations, pulling from techno-Orientalist clichés in sci-fi films. While koi are typically presented as ornamental rather than vital, Suparak challenges this Orientalist symbology, reclaiming and speaking to lived Asian subjectivities in which the portrayal of self is rarely initiated by the subject. Suparak's treatment of koi shifts the agency of the koi, and thereby, the Asian body and narrative. Rather than envisioning Asian futures, without Asians, how might Asian-futurisms be envisioned?



For Ornamental Purposes, 2022 Three-channel digital video (Color, silent). 8 sec. Edition of 3





"I imagined my mother in this landscape, the subject of this voyeuristic, racialized male gaze. My mother could have been captured on this footage, a nameless woman among many on the streets of Saigon. I made a photograph from one frame of each of these nameless women, stilling their movement, extracting it from that male gaze to give it new possibilities of that moment, the moment before, and the many moments after. I cannot help to think of these women's lives: to make a photograph of that moment is to wrest it from that gaze as a way for those women to somehow have survived."

Hồng-Ân Trương

The salt that stays on your tongue. is a gold toned cyanotype text on silk that moves in between English and Vietnamese. The text is based on interviews Trương did with her mother about her life in Viet Nam around the time of that photograph, when Trương's mother was 18.

This accompanying series of photographs are made from video stills appropriated from archival film footage that was shot by American and Australian soldiers in Viet Nam during the late 1960s and early 70s, when Trương's mother would have been in her late teens and early twenties. The footage was mostly shot during these soldiers' time off, and consists of wandering cameras, capturing scenes of soldiers lounging around, scenes of the city. In many hours of footage, Trương resurfaces moment after moment in different footage where the soldier, in filming the city streets, would zoom his focus on a woman dressed in aó dài on the street, fixating upon her momentarily with his lens.



00:02:09:05, 2017 Archival pigment print 7 1/2 x 10 inches (19 x 25 cm) Framed: 8 x 10 1/2 (20 x 26 cm) Edition of 5



00:04:48:08, 2017 Archival pigment print 7 1/2 x 10 inches (19 x 25 cm) Framed: 8 x 10 1/2 (20 x 26 cm) Edition of 5



01:29:48:21, 2017 Archival pigment print 7 1/2 x 10 inches (19 x 25 cm) Framed: 8 x 10 1/2 (20 x 26 cm) Edition of 5



01:10:02:11, 2017 Archival pigment print 7 1/2 x 10 inches (19 x 25 cm) Framed: 8 x 10 1/2 (20 x 26 cm) Edition of 5



01:14:07:19, 2017 Archival pigment print 7 1/2 x 10 inches (19 x 25 cm) Framed: 8 x 10 1/2 (20 x 26 cm) Edition of 5



01:17:07:22, 2017 Archival pigment print 7 1/2 x 10 inches (19 x 25 cm) Framed: 8 x 10 1/2 (20 x 26 cm) Edition of 5



The salt that stays on your tongue., 2017 Toned cyanotype on silk with wood frame 36 x 80 x 48 inches (91 x 203 x 122 cm)







"I was upset by all the kinds of racism that have happened lately. Last year, I was in Seoul, but I got to see many friends who came back to Seoul from London, New York City, and L.A., because of [all the] racism and what they witnessed. I haven't experienced any in person, but could feel this huge fear... And it was really breaking my heart again. I researched the most common guns used in America—pistol, revolver, and rifles. I took three models and made them into paper guns, titling them I've gone to look for America. Folding the papers, making [them] into origami guns, which are not functional, was like a ritual process to me—... it is presented with the tears, as a memoir to remember them. You know, we don't forget what happened."

Haena Yoo

Haena Yoo's works, titled *I've gone to look for America*, are from her most recent body of work, *The Oriental Sauce Factory*. Yoo's soy-dyed rice paper pistol and revolver are printed with newspaper headlines that read: "8 Dead in Atlanta Spa Shooting With Fears of Anti-Asian Bias," and "The Cost of Being an 'Interchangeable Asian.'" Like much of Yoo's work in *The Oriental Sauce Factory*, the origami guns are stained with soy sauce, as if stained by tears of the East, memorializing the victims of the Atlanta Spa Shooting and Asiatic femininity at large.



I've gone to look for America (Pistol I), 2021 Rice paper dyed in soy sauce 10 x 7 x 1 1/4 inches (25 x 18 x 3 cm)



I've gone to look for America (Revolver), 2021 Rice paper dyed in soy sauce 13 x 7 x 1 1/4 inches (33 x 18 x 3 cm)



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