

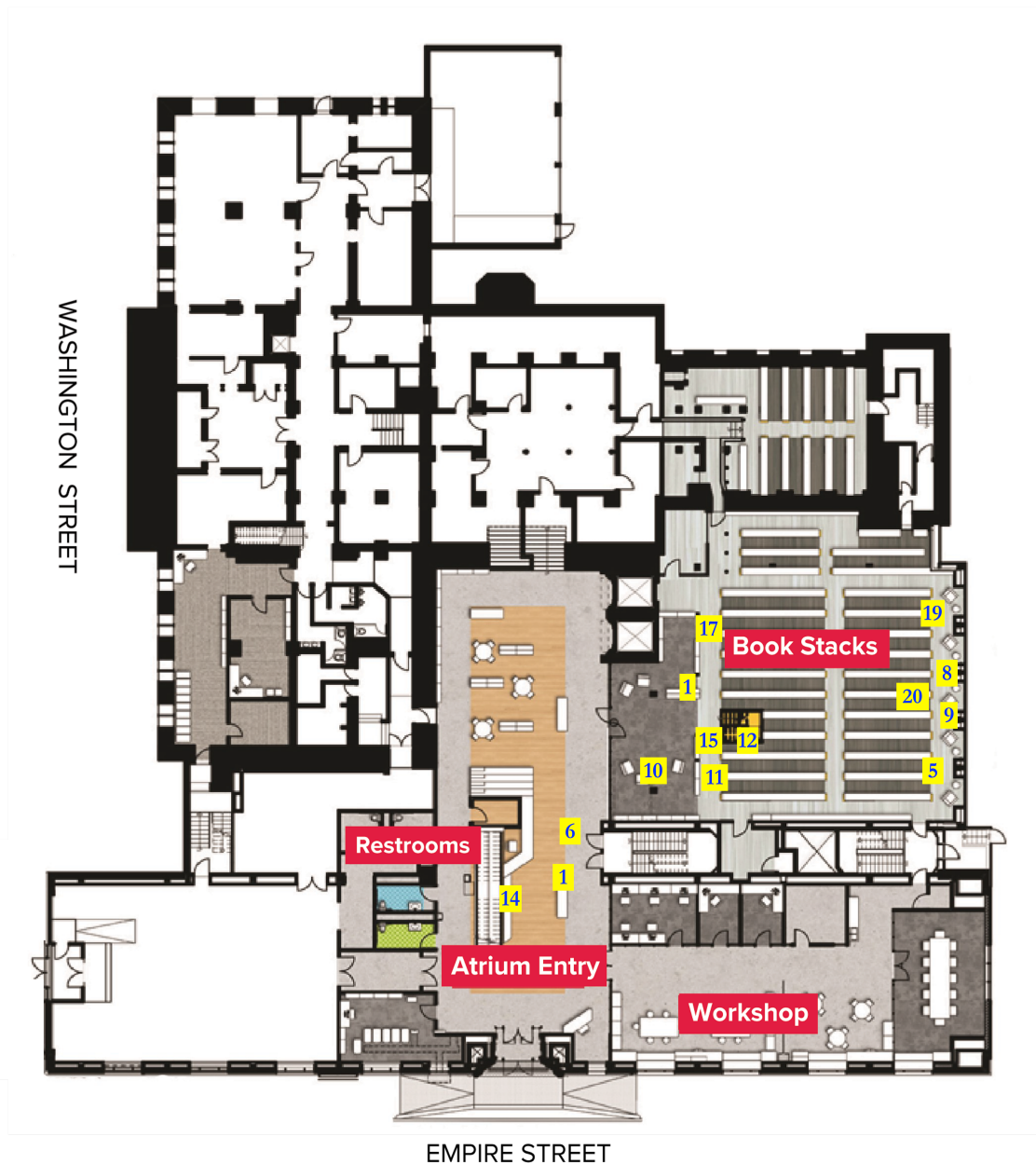
## Providence Public Library Exhibit

### “Would That: Expressions of Possibility in Asian America and Diasporas”

May 4 - June 30, 2022

#### Ground Level (Main Entrance)

The numbers correspond with the artists in the Exhibit Program.



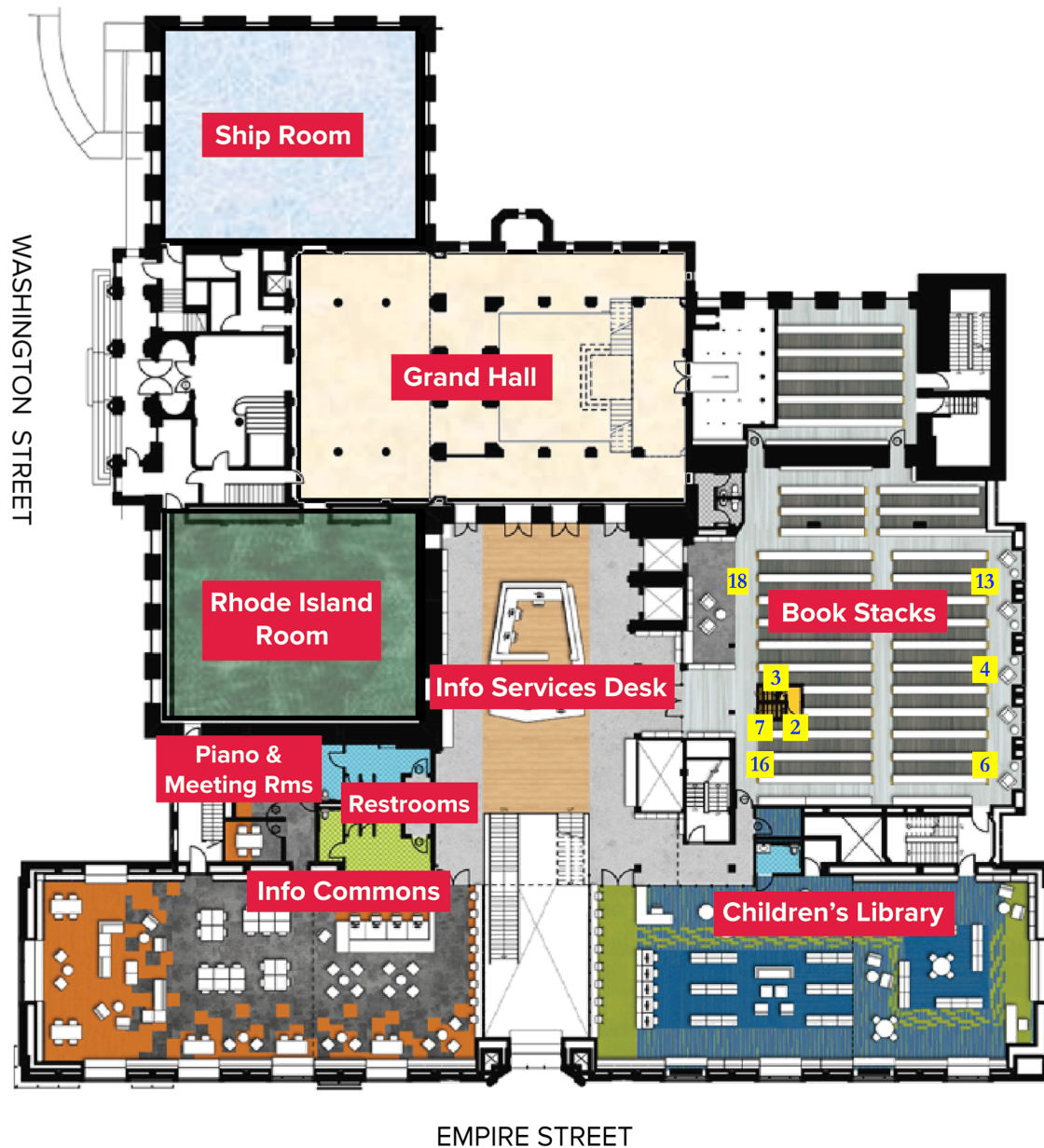
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#### Level 1

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An exhibit of creative works curated by Spring 2022 Brown University Artist in Residence, Diana Khoi Nguyen, from members of the Providence community (including Brown and RISD students) which engages with notions of possibility, family, futurity within the Asian American diasporas and intersecting diasporas.

#### *Featured Artists:*

##### **1. Bhen Alan**

###### *Tinikling*

2022

Rattan, bamboo leaves, industrial plastic fence on stretcher bars

80 x 40 inches

###### *Afi*

2022

Feathers, fabrics, industrial plastic fence on stretcher bars

72 x 27 inches

###### *Singkil*

2022

Twine, house paint, rope, thread, fabrics on stretcher bars

62 x 23 inches

###### *Tres Marias*

2022

Twine, threads, house paint, acrylic paint, and linen on stretcher bar

62 x 23 inches

Artist Statement: My work is influenced by the personal, familial, and historical experiences of Filipinos in the diaspora. I am interested in addressing issues in identity across immigration, the memory of place, and queerness. Through the flux of identity building in the diaspora, I explore the mutation of materials, art-making of the West and the East, and how to interfuse different disciplines to investigate the intersections of design with traditional Filipino weaving and craftsmanship. I work on

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the peripheries of identity, memory, sustainability, recycling, and social issues to create immersive experiences in topics ranging from immigration and trauma to celebratory affirmations.

Bio: Bhen Alan was born and raised in the Philippines and then moved to Canada before settling in the United States. Living in the U.S, Alan works in a variety of disciplines and mediums drawing from his upbringing, diasporic imaginations, and AAPI community experiences. He is currently pursuing his Masters of Fine Arts in Painting at the Rhode Island School of Design. [www.bhenalanart.com](http://www.bhenalanart.com)

## 2. By Bizzy Signal

*a / far more fluid something*

*. . . what the hand is / doing rather than aerial to fuss that pass of brush / plug & void the better I guess.*

Artist Statement: By Bizzy Signal is responsible for the collections Dazzle Was Upon the Water, no my life, ERUV, Teenage Tyee Galaxy Brain, END OF TRAVELLATOR, and We're Currently Working with Our Provider Toward a Solution. Ongoing projects include ZONING \* BALTIMORE WHERE; I'd Like You to Meet Someone, a Sailor; Having Left the Path We Crossed the Field; and Show Your Work: Tales of Find & Replace, an essay on the processes of writing and editing. Visit [#bybybizsignal](https://www.instagram.com/bybybizsignal) on Instagram to see more of Bizzy's words and pictures.

Bio: Born in Seattle, Washington, now lives in Newport, R.I. BA from University of Washington, MA and PhD ABD from Brown. Works as copy editor for sailing magazines and as teaching squash professional. Twice Finalist for U.S. Squash National Masters (Open Age-Group) Championship. Cycle, windsurf, learning to foil. Last book read: Dilla Time: The Life and Afterlife of the Hip-Hop Producer Who Reinvented Time by Dan Charnas. Listening to: 75 Dollar Bill.



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#### 3. Kerr Cirilo

*Mom and Dad*

*Dad, Family*

*Mom, Family*

*Sister, Family*

Artist Statement: My practice attempts to collapse often contradictory visual languages that largely work within or are associated with notions of power. Through a practice of activating the tools of power domination as a means to critique it, I hope to address the similarly contradictory systems of power (ranging from government institutions to institutions of the family) that work to shape the self. Using performance, the visual language of a passport photograph, and indexical seriality, the work confronts the imperial histories of the apparatus of photography triangulated against larger, hegemonic systems: the State and the home.

Bio: Kerr Cirilo was born in the Philippines and grew up in Hawaii. He received his B.A. in Religion and Studio Art at Whitman College and is currently pursuing a M.F.A. in Photography at RISD. His experiences as a queer immigrant largely informs his practice.

#### 4. Justine Chang

*If she knew the weight of this water*

*Her movements controlled by the hungers around her*

*What violences her daughter has ahead of her*

*About her, nothing else is known*

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*Each hole buries a woman disappeared by violence*

Artist Statement: After we lost my grandmother during the pandemic, I searched for her in my photographs. I was shocked by how few I had. Through this absence, I started to notice the figures in the margins. These women stood in for her. I became obsessed with finding them all, unsettled, because in that moment my lens had been focused elsewhere. I had embarrassingly waited for so many of them to leave the frame. These images are cut from a collection of my own photographs, as well as photographs taken before the Korean War from our family archive.

Bio: Justine Chang is an artist based in Providence. Her photography is featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Architectural Digest*. She is Boston Literary District's inaugural Writer-in-Residence in partnership with Emerson College. She earned a BFA in Photography at the Rhode Island School of Design.

## 5. Murphy Chang

*first stroke of a forgotten poem*

*first stroke self*

*pulling lines*

Artist Statement: These pieces are thinking about the acts of writing and of breathing as inseparable ones. The two first-stroke pieces explore the elements of the start of a character. These first strokes tell you even less than what a first letter might be able to tell you in other language writing systems. These three together act as a meditation on practice, (im)precision, and repetition.

Bio: Murphy is an artist who experiments with language as an unreliable medium.

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**6. Zoila Andrea Coc-Chang (鄭慧蘭)**

*tejiendo el universo leng3*

2021

Bittersweet tree branch, jute, thread, naturally dyed cotton, wool, paper, bamboo leaves, banana leaves and food wrappers collected from family, friends, and my own consumption

6.5 feet x 4 feet x 6 inches

*enredada*

2022

Oil on paper

Approx. 13 x 19 inches

Artist Statement: The looping metals, strung chili peppers, woven food wrappers, and compressed sugar in my work are analogous to language. A language in which ephemeral ingredients entangle with everyday industrial materials to create through lines of impermanence across spatiotemporal locales. I collect foods, like corn husks, avocado pits, and orange peels, in various states of decomposition from family, friends, and shared meals. These materials are manipulated into sculptural weavings and incarnate objects, spaces, and moments. Honoring these relationships through materials and exchange, I return to a framework that does not perpetuate a patriarchal and/or colonial notion of extraction. I seed connections that are synonymous with migration and people's relationships with home, foodways, and their everyday environments. My art practice is rooted in repetitive mark-making to build up patterns and surfaces that offer new possibilities of existing beyond our struggles and cultural representations in discursive and metaphysical realms. These metaphorical gestures are deeply connected to my Chinese-Guatemalan roots and Miami upbringing, while considering the collectivities and imaginaries of trans-continental kinship networks of my community. My work interrogates the complexities and intimacies between and within Asia and Americas. Drawing from cultural, familial, spiritual, and ecological histories, both chosen and inherited, I meld a web in which human, nature, and the divine cannot be pulled apart. They can only be pieced

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together as a composite of not only resilience, but continuity and spiritual transformation.

Bio: Zoila Andrea Coc-Chang is a Chinese-Guatemalan interdisciplinary artist from Miami. Her work interrogates the complexities and intimacies between and within Asia and Americas. Her practice plays with materials as a means of connecting migration and people's relationships with home, food, and their everyday lives. Coc-Chang will receive her MFA in Painting/Printmaking from Yale School of Art in Spring 2022 and received her BA in Studio Art and Education Studies from Brandeis University. Her work has been included in exhibitions at Lycoming College Art Gallery, Williamsport, PA; Gallery 263, Cambridge, MA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Abigail Ogilvy Gallery, Boston, MA and the Pao Arts Center in Chinatown Boston, MA. She will be an artist fellow at A.I.R. Gallery in Brooklyn, NY this upcoming Fall.

## 7. Kim Dalton

### *From the Pile of Photos in a Shoebox in the Basement*

Artist Statement: When approaching this prompt, I found myself fascinated by the way photos capture pieces of memories, which grow more ephemeral and changeable as I grow older. Every memory, and therefore every photo, is irreversibly tinted by what I now know about my family's relationships and history. I tried to capture some piece of that with this work: the distortion, overlapping of memories both my own and others', and my awareness that there are things I can't remember and context that I might never know.

Bio: Kim Dalton focuses on storytelling through their multimedia artistic practice. They were raised in Providence, RI and continue to be grateful for the way this city fosters and grows art.

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#### 8. Justin Rui Han

*Well-Lit Hovel*

2022

Oil on canvas

30 x 40 inches

Artist Statement: I construct spaces for renewal and retreat, overhauling and re-staging reality, and supply objects, beings, and decoration with the autonomy to enact mischief, to conspire. They bypass the precipice at which they begin to speak and intervene. I center the vitality of these beings' gazes, whether suspicious, fearful, or exuberant at the experience of being seen, and leave my viewers to tread a line between being seduced and being anxious witnesses. I implicate us all in the collective responsibility to reexamine what has been inspected, stolen, sold, acquired, and forgotten, while conceiving of my work as simultaneous retribution and repair.

Bio: Justin Rui Han is a Providence-based artist currently finishing up his undergraduate work at Brown and RISD.

#### 9. Jeanie

*Power*

Artist Statement: This piece is a personal exploration into the dynamic of a relationship I have between my self and 'the Asian woman' that is commonly represented in media. This dynamic indicates my vulnerable self grappling with the ways I both latch on and aggressively separate myself from what is to be expected of me, personified as the woman with chopsticks in her purple hair.

Bio: RISD BFA '24 painting

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#### 10. Janaya Kizzie

##### *Obituary in shades*

Artist Statement: Two years after his death, I found out my grandfather died. He and I never had a conversation, and the only memory I have of him is when I was a child seeing him look to me and look away, without the dotting and acknowledgement many of my other relatives gave me. It was only through his obituary that I learned I was one of many for him. He had 25 grandchildren. I was always told I have his eyes. Absence plays an inescapable role in Black communities, but I have learned that family connections run deeper than how (and how often) we see someone.

Bio: Janaya Kizzie is an artist, writer, historian and archivist living in Rhode Island.

#### 11. Rochelle Leach

##### *Headstart Mix '04*

Artist Statement: Music is an integral part of my identity. When I look at this photograph I hear the sound of CDs spinning and the feet of little girls in dance offs. I have vivid memories of the space but I don't remember the identities of the girls around me. I chose the shape of a CD to represent the culture of that time, also as a dedication to my love of music. In tandem with this project I created a sound landscape, reciting the poem then burned it onto CDs (another cultural reference) and handed it out to loved ones.

Bio: My name is Rochelle Leach. I'm a Cape-Verdean American, born and raised in Providence. I'm currently working as a freelance writer, singer/songwriter and artist in the Providence area. Much of my work is inspired, informed and dedicated to my mother, who immigrated to Rhode Island in 1990.

#### 12. Zhuqing Li



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#### *Daughters of the Flower Fragrant Garden: Sisters Separated by China's Civil War*

Artist Statement: I'm submitting my latest book to be published by Norton in June. The book, titled "Daughters of the Flower Fragrant Garden: Sisters Separated by China's Civil War," is the remarkable true story of two sisters, inseparable as children, whose lives are irrevocably disrupted when the “bamboo curtain” drops overnight between Communist mainland China and Nationalist Taiwan. Their decades-long separation and gritty determination to succeed embodies the traumatic split of the nation itself.

Bio: Zhuqing Li is a visiting associate professor in the Department of East Asian Studies at Brown University. Li is also a faculty curator at Brown University's Rockefeller Library.

## 13. Ingrid Ren

#### *Tangyuan/Yuanxiao*

#### *Cat's Cradle*

Artist Statement: These two photographs were made for a course at Brown called "Artful Teaching." The first one is of my hands holding a bowl of tangyuan for the Lantern Festival two weeks after Lunar (here, Chinese) New Year, reminding me of my parents in the polaroid to the left who used to give me tangyuan not as a celebration but as breakfast! The second photograph is of my hand holding two polaroids of my parents with a print in the background of the game cat's cradle, which I used to play with my dad.

Bio: Ingrid Ren wants to move to Philly and to write for the rest of her life. She is currently a junior at Brown University studying English on the creative nonfiction writing track.

## 14. Jingqi Steinhiser

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*Long Live the King* (一山不容二虎)

2022

Oil on canvas

54 x 54 inches

Artist Statement: Depicting the mythical, demonic & chaotic, my work associates disparate themes, revisits traditional icons, and invents new forms. My paintings are uncanny, examining traditional Chinese myths and histories, popular media, and personal stories. They survey the denial of narration and the interruption of the audience's act of reading through an interwoven relationship of surface environment and humor. My work reinvents figures like the rabbit in Alice in Wonderland singing Peking Opera, or a Wind-up bird with Dharmapala's headband: imaginative combinations of cartoon characters and cultural icons gathered in my travels that are interrupted & adapted into the new environments of my paintings.

Bio: I grew up as the only child in a family of diplomats: a performative image of rigid formality, a performance that mutated across geographies. Born in China, I lived in Russia, Mongolia, Korea and, ultimately, the USA. My aesthetic world was, thus, constructed on an unsettled foundation of dissonant cultures.

## 15. Evelyn Tan

*Little boat girl*

Oil on canvas

22 x 28 inches

*Nüwa*

Watercolor, pencil crayon, glue, graphite, on arches watercolor paper mounted on plastic.

10 x 14.5 inches

Artist Statement: *Little boat girl* explores newfound independence and divergence from childhood, as well as tethering and boundaries. Based upon a poem in my notebook. *Nüwa* is a Chinese goddess/mother archetype credited with the creation of humans, and is heavily associated with femininity and the Yin. I find her inspiring as a

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motherly figure in which she is generally free from negative depiction which is ever-present in western canonical motherly figures, and is credited as a hero figure, as she repairs the sky and sculpts humans from clay. This act of sculpting as creation reminds me of our rootedness and return to and from the earth itself.

Bio: Evelyn Tan is an artist based in Vancouver, Canada and Providence, RI. She is interested in interdisciplinary work in an illustrative context, often working in a hybrid between traditional and digital mediums, through the usage of graphic and 3D elements, textures, and unconventional materials. Her personal work utilizes metaphors, symbolism, and dreams to describe and react to physical and imagined spaces.

#### 16. Augustina Wang

*Shiny Spinarak (or, Nostalgia Misremembered)*

Oil on canvas

14 x 11 inches

Artist Statement: This is a piece about my childhood nostalgia, growing up as an Asian American girl who sought companionship with Asian media like anime/manga, specifically Pokemon. I was compelled to make this painting when I saw a Pokemon video about rare collectibles, and one of them was a picture of Spinarak (this spider pokemon). Standard Spinaraks are normally green, but all Pokemon have a "shiny" form, which are rare 1/8192 chances for them to spawn in a different colorway in-game. I think there was some beauty in misremembering the color of a Pokemon, only to realize that misremembering is inherently more valuable/desirable than the original.

Bio: I am a first generation Asian American woman. I grew up in Flushing, Queens, which has blossomed into a big Chinatown in NYC. My parents were both Chinese immigrants, both from the rural lands of Southern China.

#### 17. Nina Jun Yuchi

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*ASCII and Me (1)*

*ASCII and Me (2)*

*ASCII and Me (3)*

Artist Statement: Besides some immediate relatives, I've never met much of my extended family who all live in China. The gaps in my ancestral memory leave me feeling curious about my great grandparents, their parents and grandparents. How did their sociopolitical backgrounds and lived experiences eventually lead to my parents' immigration to the U.S.? Often my mom sends photographs of relatives long forgotten and I see traces of myself. In an effort to memorialize these photos in my own way, I translated them into ASCII art and compiled them into a zine—my own photobook of (un)fabricated memories.

Bio: Nina Jun Yuchi is a queer Chinese American designer and currently an MA candidate for art education at RISD. Their design practice blends visual language with politics, community, and internet culture. In addition to their printed zine work, they conduct community-based workshops that interrogate ideas of design, collaboration, and futures.

## 18. Ivan Zhao

*Love Letters: An Inertial Moment*

*Love Letters: Trey and Sam*

*Love Letters: God*

*(9/3) Ways To Choose Dishes I Wish I Could Eat Again*

Artist Statement: Short pieces about family, the body, and memory. What does it mean for possibilities and futures

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Bio: I am a writer, illustrator, and student at Brown University where I'm getting a Bachelor's in Computer Science and Math. Some of my pieces have been published in Visions, Reboot, and other small publications, and I'm currently working on a photo series about linearity in memory. I can usually be found at the dog park or baking many loafs of bread.

#### 19. Miranda Zhen-Yao Van-Boswell

*Handholding with Sun Yung Shin*

2022

Cyanotype

*Handholding with Diana Khoi Nguyen*

2022

Cyanotype

*Handholding with Tiffany Sia*

2022

Cyanotype

Artist Statement: These pieces combine my 'Dust Prints' with excerpts that pertain to time and/or change by Asian and Asian American women writers like Sun Yung Shin, Tiffany Sia, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha.

Being from Hong Kong, it is difficult knowing it will soon not exist in a recognizable way. I see my work, as Cha says, as a “realization of the imprint, the inscription etched from the experience of leaving.” Made through a daily practice of creating cyanotypes of dust swept from my surroundings, Dust Prints transforms the anxiety of pending nation-loss into poetic evidence of Hong Kong beyond its borders.

How does a place switch its meaning to become something else? And, how can we hold on to a day? Dust Prints intends to dream, however temporarily, of a not yet. My commitment to the project concretized when I read “Hong Kong will be the first postmodern city to die”. While Tiffany Sia's claim is devastating, I believe Dust Prints can attend to this emerging sense of grief.

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Bio: Miranda Zhen-Yao Van-Boswell is an artist of the Hong Kong diaspora, currently living in the ancestral homelands of the Narragansett Nation (colonially known as Providence, Rhode Island). Coincidentally born the same year as the Hong Kong handover from Britain to China (1997), Miranda is making one cyanotype a day for the next 25 years in anticipation of a nationhood death certificate issued July 1st 2047.

#### 20. Kaitlan Khánh Lan Bui

*You can't / begin here*

Artist Statement: What is the difference between memory and history? How can we remember events we never experienced? As the first in my family to be born in America, these questions scratched at my heart for a long time. My mother came to America in 1979, my father in 1975—both pushed across the water by war. "You can't / begin here" came into being when I tried to order those family histories but could not. Paul Geráldy writes that "memory is a poet, not a historian." So I wrote this poem by piecing together fragments of readings, quotes, and sayings which I stumbled upon during my research—phrases that "stuck," for better or worse. I later found that this form of poetry is called "cento," which means "planting slips of trees" and "patchwork garment." This is how memory works, I think. We plant slips of trees, which grow into other trees. We re-member by dismembering and reconfiguring (patchwork). We hold each other, and we let each other. I thank especially my Ông Bà Ngoại and my Bà Tu for letting me hold their stories.

Bio: Kaitlan writes from the California suburbs and Providence library nooks, or else in airplanes. She is wrapping up her undergraduate studies at Brown University and will be serving as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Vietnam next year. Kaitlan is currently thinking about the gentle steadiness of water.