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Sojourns

At the Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation, Ojai, CA

Curated by Jennifer Armetta, Director ENGAGE Projects

Alejandro Figueredo Diaz-Perera, Derrick Woods-Morrow, Hương Ngô and Edra Soto

September 6 - October 26, 2024

Opening: Friday, September 6, 5:00-7:00pm



DERRICK WOODS-MORROW, *Acts of Becoming an Archipelago*, 2019, Triptych, Archival pigment prints (framed)
24 x 18 in 61 x 45.7 cm each

"Sojourns" is a contemplative exploration of migration, offering viewers a resting point to reflect on the fluid boundaries of existence. This art show, presented at the Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation and curated by ENGAGE Projects, features the works of Edra Soto, Derrick Woods-Morrow, Hương Ngô, and Alejandro Figueredo Diaz-Perera. It delves into the complexities of migration and its impact on body, space, and identity. Through their diverse practices, these artists unravel the liminality of migratory experiences, inviting audiences to engage with the nuanced intersections of personal and collective histories. The exhibition serves as a profound meditation on the themes of displacement, transience, and the continuous search for belonging in an ever-changing world.

Each artist in "Sojourns" brings a unique perspective to the theme of migration. Hương Ngô draws from the stories of her family's nearly two year-long stay in Hong Kong refugee camps through the eyes of her siblings, who were children at the time. Derrick Woods-Morrow navigates the displacements caused by migration through symbolic and voyeuristic imagery, exploring how geographical movements shape Black sexual freedoms. Edra Soto's Graft series intertwines architectural motifs with diasporic memory, creating immersive spaces that foster empathy and reflection. Alejandro Figueredo Diaz-Perera engages with absence and paradox, inviting viewers to decode the phenomenological tensions inherent in migratory experiences. Together, these artists offer a rich and multifaceted examination of migration, urging viewers to consider the fluid and often ambiguous nature of identity and belonging.

Alejandro Figueredo Diaz-Perera is a conceptual artist from Havana, Cuba who works a variety of media including: video, photography, painting, installation and text. Whereas, the medium is dictated by the idea or investigation. Through his practice, he seeks to make connections between the personal and the universal points of view, exploring absence and paradox in many different ways, by the process of forcing to contradict himself. Exhibitions include an intervention at The Chicago Artists Coalition, a two-person show with collaborator Cara Megan Lewis at Antena Gallery and participation in the Rapid Pulse International Performance Art Festival at Defibrillator Gallery, both in Chicago. Participation in festivals and exhibitions in Cuba include the International Festival of Video Art in Camaguey, the 10th and 11th Havana Biennials, and a workshop-exhibition in collaboration with Gabriel Orozco in Havana.

Derrick Woods-Morrow's (b.1990) work is a meditation on deviation and disruption, on language and representation - the laborious & the playful. Currently based in Chicago, where he works as a sexual health advocate and activist, and originally from Greensboro, North Carolina, his artistic practice explores black sexual freedoms, the complicated histories concerning access to land and the navigation of the American terrain by black & queer peoples. By deploying a wide variety of media- including photographic material, ceramic sculpture, film, and narrative performance, he attempts to reconcile the painful, personal and shared experiences of existing as black & queer in America. Through fluidly choreographed movement queer folx engage with Woods-Morrow's personal narratives, imbuing the moments captured in his photographs with questions of shared existence, commonality, cultural vernaculars for identifying oneself as part of a community.

Hương Ngô is an interdisciplinary artist based in the United States. Born in Hong Kong (1979) and having grown up in the American South, Ngô is an assistant professor in Contemporary Practices at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Beginning her studies in the sciences, she received her BFA (Summa cum laude) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (James M. Johnson Scholar, 2001) and continued as a Trustees Scholar in Art & Technology Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (MFA, 2004). Her archive-based practice began while a studio fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program in 2012. She was awarded the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Grant in Vietnam (2016) to realize a project, begun at the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer in France, exhibited at DePaul Art Museum, Chicago (2017), and continued through the Camargo Core Program, France (2018), that examines the colonial history of surveillance in Vietnam and the anti-colonial strategies of resistance vis-à-vis the activities of female organizers and liaisons.

Edra Soto is a Puerto Rican born interdisciplinary artist and co-director of the outdoor project space The Franklin. Her recent projects, which are motivated by civic and social actions, prompt viewers to reconsider cross-cultural dynamics, the legacy of colonialism, and personal responsibility. Venues presenting Soto's work include Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's satellite, The Momentary, AK; Albright-Knox Northland, NY; Chicago Cultural Center, IL; Smart Museum, IL; Museum of Contemporary Photography, IL and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago, IL. Soto completed the public art commission titled Screenhouse on view at Chicago's Millennium Park until Spring 2023.