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Independent Master Artist Project



City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

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As a leading, progressive arts and cultural agency, DCA empowers Los Angeles’s vibrant communities by supporting and providing access to quality visual, literary, musical, performing, and educational arts programming; managing vital cultural centers; preserving historic sites; creating public art; and funding services provided by arts organizations and individual artists.

Formed in 1925, DCA promotes arts and culture as a way to ignite a powerful dialogue, engage LA’s residents and visitors, and ensure LA’s varied cultures are recognized, acknowledged, and experienced. DCA’s mission is to strengthen the quality of life in Los Angeles by stimulating and supporting arts and cultural activities, ensuring public access to the arts for residents and visitors alike.

DCA advances the social and economic impact of arts and culture through grant-making; public art; community arts; performing arts; and strategic marketing, development, design, and digital research. DCA creates and supports arts programming, maximizing relationships with other city agencies, artists, and arts and cultural nonprofit organizations to provide excellent service in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles.

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Daniel Tarica
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I am proud to congratulate the 2025 City of Los Angeles Independent Master Artist Project (COLA IMAP) grantees. They are joining a distinguished cohort of artists that, since 1997, has had a profound impact on a wide array of cultural and creative sectors of Los Angeles. As a fierce advocate for the importance and value of arts and culture, I believe COLA IMAP has thrived because of strong public support, nurturing creativity, fostering cultural exchange, and advancing the careers of emerging, mid-career, and established artists alike.

The city of Los Angeles has a history of serving as a vibrant hub of cultural exchange, bringing together artists from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. Residents and visitors of Los Angeles are provided with endless opportunities to engage with a diversity of creative forces, share perspectives, and forge meaningful connections across geographic, cultural, political and artistic boundaries. This not only fosters connection within these smaller communities, it also promotes cross-cultural understanding and dialogue.

The new members of this cohort join the esteemed group of contemporary visual artists, graphic designers, literary artists, musicians, and performing artists who have also received this honor. The transformative experience of this program often results in the development of innovative work that enriches the cultural landscape of Southern California.

The COLA IMAP provides artists with resources that allow them to create dedicated time to focus and grow their creative practice, to the creation of a new body of work(s), and an opportunity to deliver their vision to a public audience of creative constituents, advocates, and art supporters within the creative capital of Los Angeles. The elevation allows artists to explore new ideas, experiment with different techniques, and push the boundaries of their artistic expression.

The Program’s literary and performing artists are presented

annually each summer by Grand Performances, Downtown Los Angeles’s premiere outdoor free performing arts venue. Additionally, the program’s visual artists are presented in an annual group exhibition at the Department of Cultural Affairs’s Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery. The catalogue, designed by Garland Kirkpatrick, presents works from the COLA IMAP with essays detailing their importance and impact.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles City Council for their ongoing leadership and support of COLA IMAP. COLA IMAP is led by a dedicated team of public servants who are committed to ensuring accessibility and opportunity to all individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and experiences.

The investment in this program empowers artists to realize their full potential and enriches our communities with invaluable contributions to the cultural life of Los Angeles.

Daniel Tarica
General Manager
City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

COLA IMAP— 2025
City of Los Angeles
Independent Master Artist Project

City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

Introductions

Question: *Where can imagination be found?*
Answer: *In many places between self-regulation and other-awareness.*

I am not alone in believing that our world is a serious place with serious issues. The United States of America (USA) is likewise experiencing a narrative-crisis between the complex goals of its past and some more restricted concepts of its possible futures. What kind of beacon-of-hope should we become? For whom and with whom are we imagining a shared future? And which artistic minds will craft our updated politics?

In 1859, after touring the USA to assess the merits and methods of a political democracy, French lawyer and writer, Alexis de Tocqueville, noted a dozen key aspects of the logistics of a functioning republic which did not yet exist in France. Two of those aspects seem more important than ever: an American sense of humor (other-awareness), and a moral-impulse—a socio-spiritual objective rather than a religious determination—to create “common conditions” (self-regulation) for all people: native or immigrants, wealthy or working-class, of any skin color or family orientation, etc. These emotional tools are useful in developing the “long-game.” In the short term as well, day to day, we can use humor and generosity to approach obstacles. And if the USA is to remain a progressive democracy we will also need to continually (re)imagine our tactics for harmonious stewardship.

I am not alone in trusting that the theory of promise of the USA stands best on four equal legs: executive, legislative, judicial, and a set of civil (secular) servants drawn from the general public who faithfully administrate programs that are open and honest in (directly and indirectly) helping citizen wellness.

Equally important that our theory of stability remains framed by human empathy—recognized as the consciousness of a civil society since the 19th century—with four corners: generous attention to self and others; positive assessment to seek and not avoid relationships; social-enlightenment through community-coalition; and complexity, valued higher than simplistic binaries (of us-versus-them), since no culture or person has merely two dimensions.

I am not alone in recognizing that avant-garde artists are often model citizens for these great values of humor, interaction, and imagination. Artistic minds (amateur and professional) thrive in a paradigmatic mode for expressing verisimilitude. Here we can be reminded of Dutch neuroscientist, Bernard J. Baars, who outlined the “special qualities” of people who are most conscious of human adaptation. Artists perform vital work to frame human consciousness within a network of wellness. This includes the nine outstanding entrepreneurs profiled in this catalog: who practice re-invention as a function of growing (not just holding) existing values, who prioritize problem solving to build inclusive concepts and conceptualizations, and who make decisions to communicate self-connections to form broader relations. These are the progressive philosophical tactics and joyously rewarding tools for fabricating a new stage in a better world. Creativity is a profound activity, because it converts the mundane into the symbolic. Artists are vital for imagining and activating renewed politics. And over the long game, art has one of the same primary functions as old age—transcendence. The spectrum of experts documented in this beautiful catalog demonstrate that wisdom and artmaking are how we express profound humanity.

Thanks to the 2024-25 COLA IMAP artists and catalog team for illustrating that the blessedly complex pathway is the creative-forward pathway.

Joe Smoke
Director of Grant Programs

Independent
Master Artist
Project

Azar Lawrence

Bryan Ida
Carmen Argote

Charles Jensen

Flora Kao
Jemima Wyman
Olivia Booth

2025

2025 PANELISTS

Deborah Brockus

Daniel Corral

Patricia Fernandez

Stuart Irel

Jamilla James

Álvaro Daniel Márquez

Nancy Meyer

Viva Padilla

Duane Paul

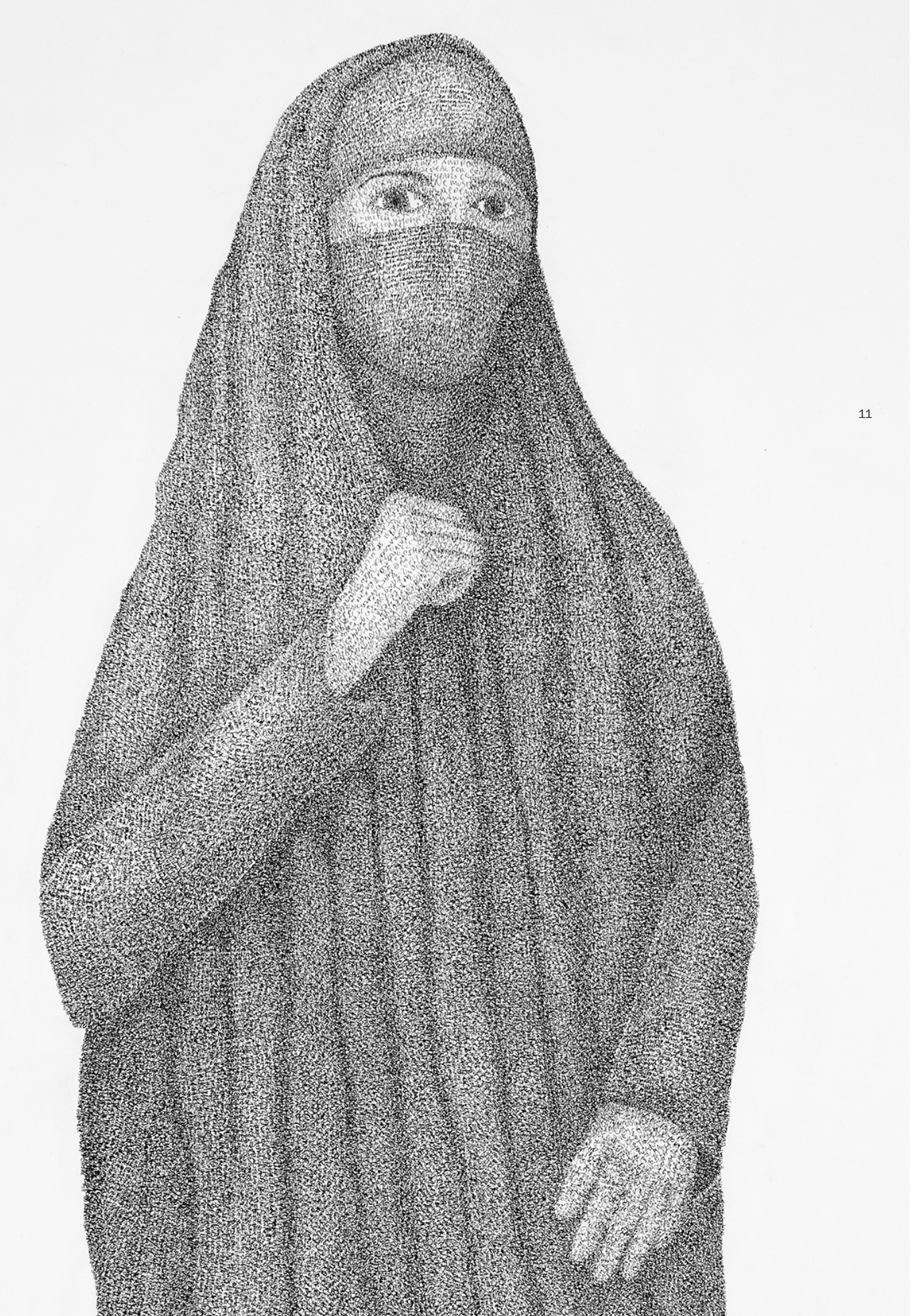
Wilfried Souly

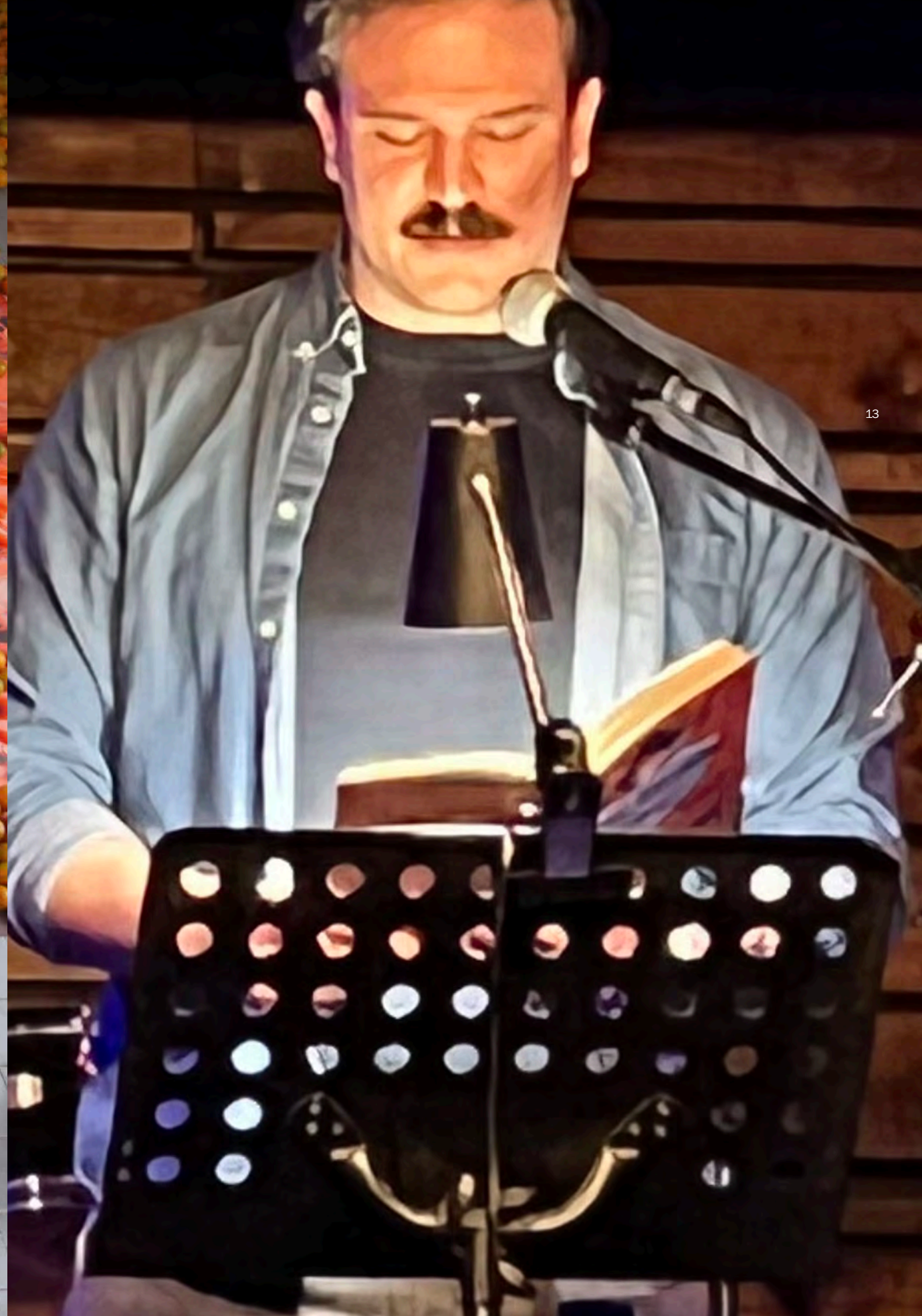
Yozmit The DogStar

VISUAL

PERFORMING

City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs











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Azar Lawrence

"Azar Lawrence silhouetted against the iconic New York Cityscape during an unforgettable night at Jazz at Lincoln Center, NYC where he has performed for decades." Photo: Chuck Koton

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Bryan Ida

"Neighbor," 2017, 60 x 37 ink on panel. In 2017, the president was trying to justify an Executive Order that banned foreign nationals from seven predominantly Muslim countries from visiting the United States. He had chosen twitter as an unofficial channel to disseminate the intention of the Muslim Ban. The marks that form the portrait are made from me writing out 1550 of Trump's tweets from inauguration day January 20, 2017.

Photo: Elon Schoenholz

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Carmen Argote

Manéjese con Cuidado (Handle with Love/Care), PAOS, Guadalajara, Mexico, 2019.

Oranges, Cochineal, Lemon Juice
Public action at muralist José Clemente Orozco's former home where Argote released a ton and a half of oranges from the roof, letting them roll through the house and around the painting. The action explored themes of fruit production, labor, class, private property, and food distribution

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Charles Jensen

Charles Jensen DiPiazza reading
Caption: Charles Jensen reads from *Instructions between Takeoff and Landing*, 2023.

Photo: Bill Greening.

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Flora Kao

Sacred Grove, 2021. Bamboo and salvaged silk, 12 x 22 x 11 feet.

In remembrance of my grandmother, I tied countless silk prayer leaves on the branches of salvaged bamboo, an auspicious Chinese symbol of strength, resilience, and growth. Fluttering in sacred Buddhist colors, each prayer leaf is tied with a wish for peace in the

face of loss. In Buddhist culture, the bamboo forest serves as a sanctuary for contemplation and meditation, offering a portal to enlightenment. *Sacred Grove* offers a space for solace, serenity, and healing.

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Jemima Wyman

Thronging Bluff Face and Epochal Flourish (installation detail from *Iconography of Revolt*), 2018, Custom-printed fabric, masks, second-hand protest garments with spray-paint and metal armature; and custom-printed wallpaper, 63 x 77 x 8 inches (textile sculpture); 169 x 658 inches (wallpaper), Photo: City Gallery Wellington

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Olivia Booth

Citicorp Cylinder, 2012

glass, mirror and gouache; 30 x 20 inches. Installed at Weekend Gallery, LA. Photo: Heather Rasmussen

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Wilfried Souly

Saana/The Foreigner, Dance/Choreography by Wilfried G Souly, Presented as part of REDCAT's New Original Works Festival, 2014. Photo: Steve Gunther ©CalArts

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Yozmit The DogStar

Infinite Mirror, 2020

A reimagining of Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, known for its fluid, transgender essence—appearing as both male and female. Avalokitesvara means "one who hears all the sounds of the world," offering aid wherever there is a cry of suffering. Costume: Yozmit; Costume Print: Peter Tomka; Makeup: Jennifer Corona Set Design: Taylor Almodovar & Justin Gardner; Post-Production: Crystal Retouch Photo: Ted Sun for *Timid Magazine* Editorial, shot at Fat Eye Studio, May 2020

Azar Lawrence



Azar sat in with Jones, the former invaluable drummer with John Coltrane's quartet. That was all it took. Jones asked the teenage Lawrence to join his band and come back to New York with him.

Three-year-old Azar Lawrence, sitting at the piano beside his beloved mother Ima, could not have imagined a future as a jazz musician. Nevertheless, he loved music and dedicated himself to learning the fundamentals until slowly the unimaginable became a dream and the dream finally manifested in reality.

One of the most important lessons Azar learned from his music teacher Mom, was the value of practice. He would practice for hours in his family's Baldwin Hills neighborhood in South Los Angeles until, at the age of 5, he was playing violin in the University of Southern California (USC) Junior Orchestra. But kids being kids, after a few years, the violin toting Lawrence had taken enough mockery from his peers.

So, one day, after seeing a friend of his father's stop by the house with a cool looking saxophone, young Azar put in his request. The next day his loving and supportive father, Azel, came home with an alto sax. Now the young man's love of music became an obsession, and, in a few years, Lawrence was performing with the Dorsey High School band. It was during his years at Dorsey High School that Lawrence became friends with two young men who would accelerate his musical education.

In piano prodigy Herbie Baker, Lawrence found a kindred musical spirit, a fellow seeker, with whom he eagerly shared hours practicing. Often the two young men would cut school early in the afternoon and head over to Lawrence's house to work out musically. In the South LA community, Baker was already seen as an important pianist and composer. Tragically, early one morning, the news reached Azar that his good friend died in an auto accident.

After Dorsey High School, while Lawrence was attending Los Angeles City College, he began playing with the legendary piano master and leader of the Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra (P.A.P.A. or The Ark), Horace Tapscott. Since The Ark had a couple of great alto players like Arthur Blythe and Will Connell, Lawrence began playing baritone sax.

Around this time, while hanging around the local chapter of the American Federation of Musicians for a rehearsal, Lawrence, with alto sax in hand, heard a few powerful words from Los Angeles drummer Raymond Pounds, who told him "Get a man's horn!" So he did. And from that day on, the tenor saxophone became Azar's main horn.

Reggie Golson, son of jazz master Benny Golson, also pushed Lawrence forward on his musical path. Golson introduced

him to John Coltrane's music, which would remain the most powerful musical influence on Lawrence's musical direction. Most importantly, one night Golson took Lawrence down to The Lighthouse Café, a jazz club and restaurant in Hermosa Beach, California, to see Elvin Jones' band.

Through Benny Golson's introduction, Azar sat in with Jones, the former invaluable drummer with John Coltrane's quartet. That was all it took. Jones asked the teenage Lawrence to join his band and come back to New York with him. After his parents gave him their permission, Lawrence went East and moved in with Elvin and Keiko. Although Lawrence was too young to drink in the jazz clubs, he would play, record and travel the world with Jones for several years. Lawrence's devotion to his dream of becoming a jazz musician had brought him to Olympian heights: this young lion with the tenor sax was making a name for himself.

Azar Lawrence had another dream to manifest: he longed to play with the other cog in John Coltrane's band, pianist McCoy Tyner. Whenever Azar would come into a new city with Elvin Jones, it seemed that Tyner's band was departing. But one week in New York City, while Jones was concluding a gig at the venerable Village Vanguard, a jazz club in Greenwich Village, Tyner's band came into town to play the following night. Tyner's drummer, Alphonse Mouzon, went down to the Village Vanguard to hear the band and was so impressed by Lawrence's playing that he later convinced Tyner to bring Azar into the band.

For more than five years, Azar Lawrence toured with Tyner and played on several classic jazz albums like Enlightenment (Milestone, 1973) and Atlantis (Milestone, 1974). During this time, Lawrence signed a contract with Prestige Records that eventually produced three highly acclaimed albums, all of which have been re-released over the last few years.

Lawrence's path would widen in the coming years and in addition to jazz, he returned to his roots as a "funkateer." He would write and record with Earth, Wind and Fire, Marvin Gaye, Woody Shaw, Freddie Hubbard and many others. At the start of the 21st century, Lawrence decided to hone his jazz chops as he tours the world and makes several recordings that reveals the fire and passion still burning bright hot!

Looking ahead in 2025, Azar Lawrence will be touring throughout the United States and Europe with the hard swinging band, The Cookers, with gigs in London

and Italy in March 2025. Then Lawrence will perform several concerts in Europe celebrating his years with the late great pianist, McCoy Tyner. In May 2025, Lawrence will be back with The Cookers at the Keystone Korner in Baltimore, Maryland. Finally, upon his return to Los Angeles in June 2025, Lawrence will perform with his own band, The Azar Lawrence Experience, in support of the release of his highly anticipated new record, Turn Up The Music, which will be released in June 2025 by Trazar Records.

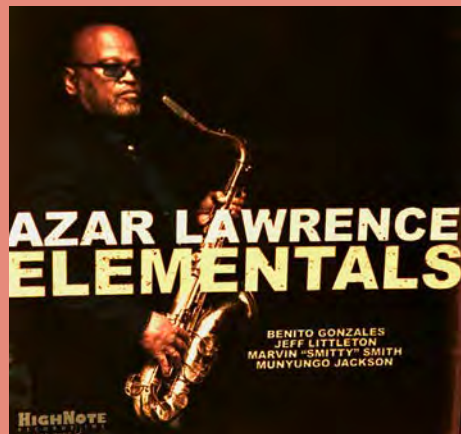
Chuck Koton

“Azar Lawrence in his element, channeling decades of musical mastery into an unforgettable performance at Roscoe’s Jazz Lounge.” Photo (Side Profile in Performance): Photo: Jean Renard

“Azar Lawrence delivering an electrifying performance at The Jazz Standard in New York City where he performed regularly for over 20 years.” Photo (The Jazz Standard, NYC): Photo: Chuck Koton

“Azar Lawrence lighting up the stage at the RG Club in Venice Beach, bringing the groove and east coast players to the California coast.” Photo (RG Club, Venice Beach, CA): Photo: Chuck Koton





Opposite:
Azar Lawrence, *Elementals*
Prayer For My Ancestors
Azar Lawrence: *Mystic Journey*
Azar Lawrence: *The Seeker*

Azar Lawrence

Legendary saxophonist and composer with a career spanning over five decades. Gained prominence performing with jazz icons like McCoy Tyner, Miles Davis, Elvin Jones, Freddie Hubbard, and Woody Shaw.

Renowned for blending spiritual jazz and fusion, influenced by the legacy of Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Jaco Pastorius, Maurice White, and Pharoah Sanders. Released acclaimed solo albums such as *Bridge into the New Age* (Prestige, 1974), *Summer Solstice* (Prestige, 1975), *People Moving* (Prestige, 1976) and *New Sky* (Trazer, 2022).

Collaborated across genres with artists like Earth, Wind & Fire, Marvin Gaye, and Phyllis Hyman showcasing his versatility. Continues to captivate audiences worldwide with powerful performances, new releases, and timeless artistry.





Bryan Ida

Ida's portraits compel the viewer to consider the lives of the figures he portrays, but they are not heavy-handed. Indeed, however dark the embedded histories that touch the lives of these people, it's surprising that an optimistic air clings to them.

Portraits of Compassion

The genesis of Bryan Ida's series of historically meaningful, nuanced layered portraits was his deep dive into his own personal family background. From there, propelled by compassion and human interest, the series took off, evolving into a far-reaching quest for stories of uprooted people from unrelated marginalized and often overlooked minority communities.

The first drawing portrays Ida's grandfather standing next to his family's suitcases, waiting at the bus station in San Francisco to be transported to an internment camp in Utah. The portrait was derived from a photograph taken by Dorothea Lange, who was commissioned to document the forced relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II. The work is composed with hand-lettered text taken from Executive Order 9066, by which President Roosevelt mandated the incarceration of Japanese Americans in 1942.

Since the portrait of his grandfather, Ida has gone on to produce many more. One of his most recent subjects is Jimmy Centano, an LA resident of Mexican heritage whose parents immigrated to the US from Mexico in the early 60s under the Bracero program, a post World War II policy allowing visas for Mexican agricultural laborers. Alluding to this history, Ida rendered the portrait in lettering from US code 1325, which criminalized unauthorized entry in the U.S.— making it a misdemeanor. Originally passed in 1929, the law was not applied until the great depression when it was vigorously enforced.

Another drawing portrays the son of a Holocaust survivor described with wording from the Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935, by which the Nazis ostracized and expelled Jews from German society. Also haunting, are portraits of a homeless man portrayed with lettering from the Bill of Rights, and a resident of Watts defined with wording from residency covenants which restricted land ownership to whites only.

The historic text Ida transcribes to create these figures is not immediately apparent. The artist has employed such subtlety in the delicate crafting of his drawings, the lettering appears to describe form and shade organically. On closer look, words gradually emerge to express the essence of events that marked the lives of the subjects they portray. These are honest glimpses into the stories of individuals whose circumstances have been compromised by official dogma or social

injustice. Notably, all the figures are somehow connected to Ida. They represent real people the LA-based artist has encountered in his personal life. Both historically resonant and timeless, their stories are entwined in their portraits.

For Ida, customarily a painter of abstract compositions filled with vibrant color, the series is a profound departure. By confining himself to the austerity of black ink, he emphasizes the stark reality reflected in these portraits. The works are drafted on panels with a soft ivory satin mat finish, which gives them a sort of archival feel. The delicate lines of black text overlap and wrap to create shading and dimension. The eyes of the subjects gaze directly at the viewer, confronting us, but not in an assertive way. Instead, they seem to ask us to engage with them, to look at them, or more particularly, not to overlook them. They silently implore us to recognize their humanity. Some of the figures appear to be on the verge of stepping outside the frame.

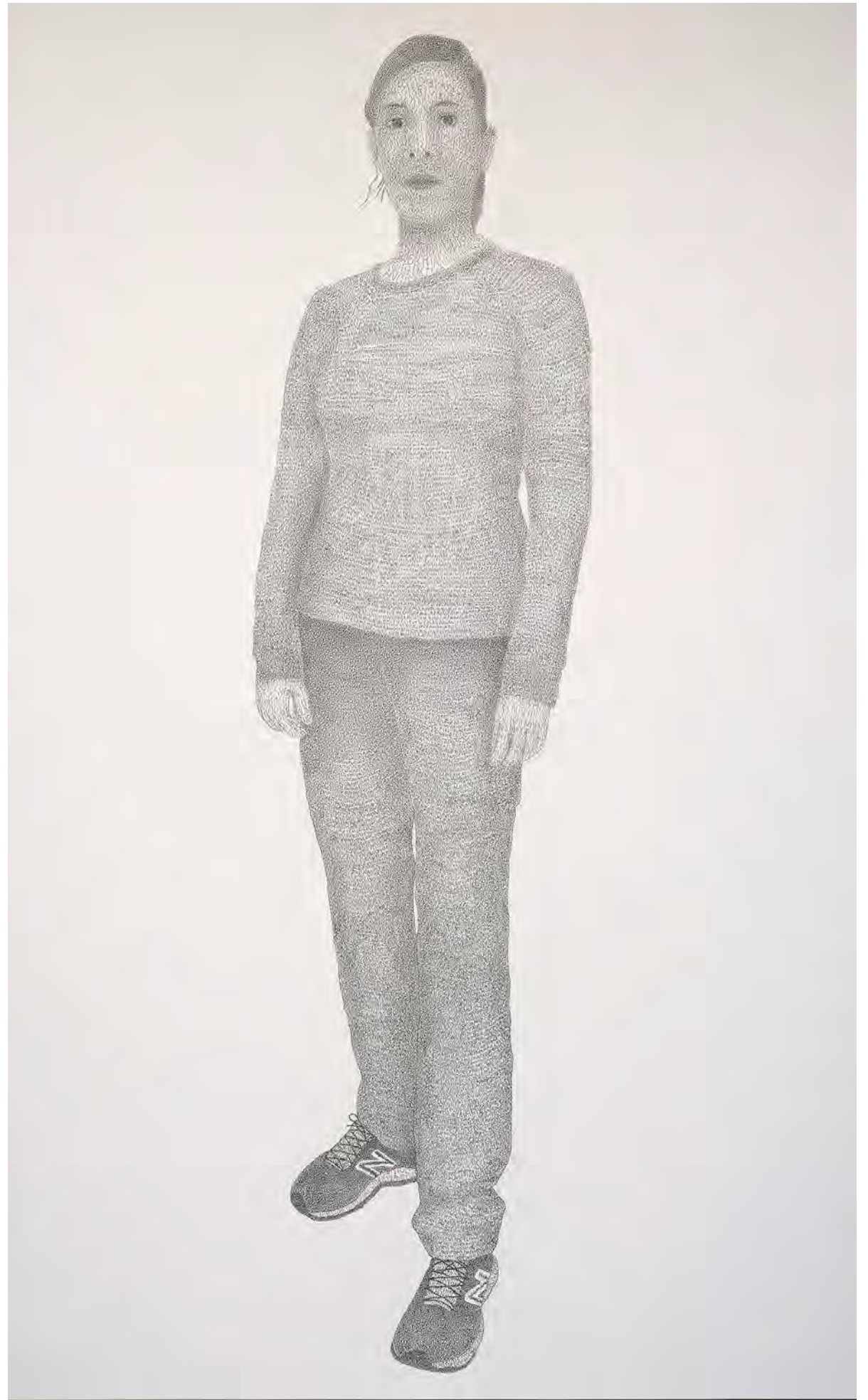
There's an integrity and singularity in this series, as in Ida's overall vision. It's especially remarkable that he produced the more recent portraits with his left hand. After overworking his right arm in his dedicated—and all consuming—studio practice, the artist suffered debilitating nerve damage. During his slow and painful rehabilitation, in the last few years, Ida has taught himself to draw and paint left-handed.

If visual art can, at times, be construed as a form of activism, this series makes a statement about human rights, social injustice and the disenfranchised, but not in an overt way. Ida's portraits compel the viewer to consider the lives of the figures he portrays, but they are not heavy-handed. Indeed, however dark the embedded histories that touch the lives of these people, it's surprising that an optimistic air clings to them. Even when portraying individuals who have been subjugated, as in the portrait of his own grandfather, the artist triumphs in his ability to allow the figures to transcend circumstance. In his careful renditions, Ida succeeds in capturing the dignity and sense of honor with which his subjects will go on to comport themselves throughout time.

Megan Frances Abrahams



Chumahan, 2024
60 x 37 ink on panel
Photo: Elon Schoenholz



Christine (detail), 2024
60 x 37 ink on panel
Photo: Elon Schoenholz



Grandfather, 2018
ink on panel 60 x 37
Photo: Elon Schoenholz



Grandmother, 2023
ink on panel 60 x 37
Photo: Elon Schoenholz



Jimmy, 2025
60 x 37 ink on panel
Photo: Elon Schoenholz

Bryan Ida

Born 1963 in Palo Alto, CA
Lives and works in Los Angeles

www.bryanida.com

Selected Exhibitions

2023
Bryan Ida Life of Change,
Bakersfield Museum of Art,
Bakersfield, CA (Solo
Retrospective)

Collective Memory Installation,
Part of Illuminate LA, Los Angeles
County Department of Arts and
Culture, Los Angeles, CA (Group)

We the People, Featured artist, The
Billboard Creative, Los Angeles, CA
(Group)

Bridging the Pacific, Torrance Art
Museum, Torrance CA (Group)

con.Text, de Saisset Museum, Santa
Clara University, Santa Clara, CA
(Solo)

2020
con.Text, Japanese American
Museum, San Jose, CA (Solo)

con.Text, West Valley College,
Saratoga, CA (Solo)

Selected Bibliography

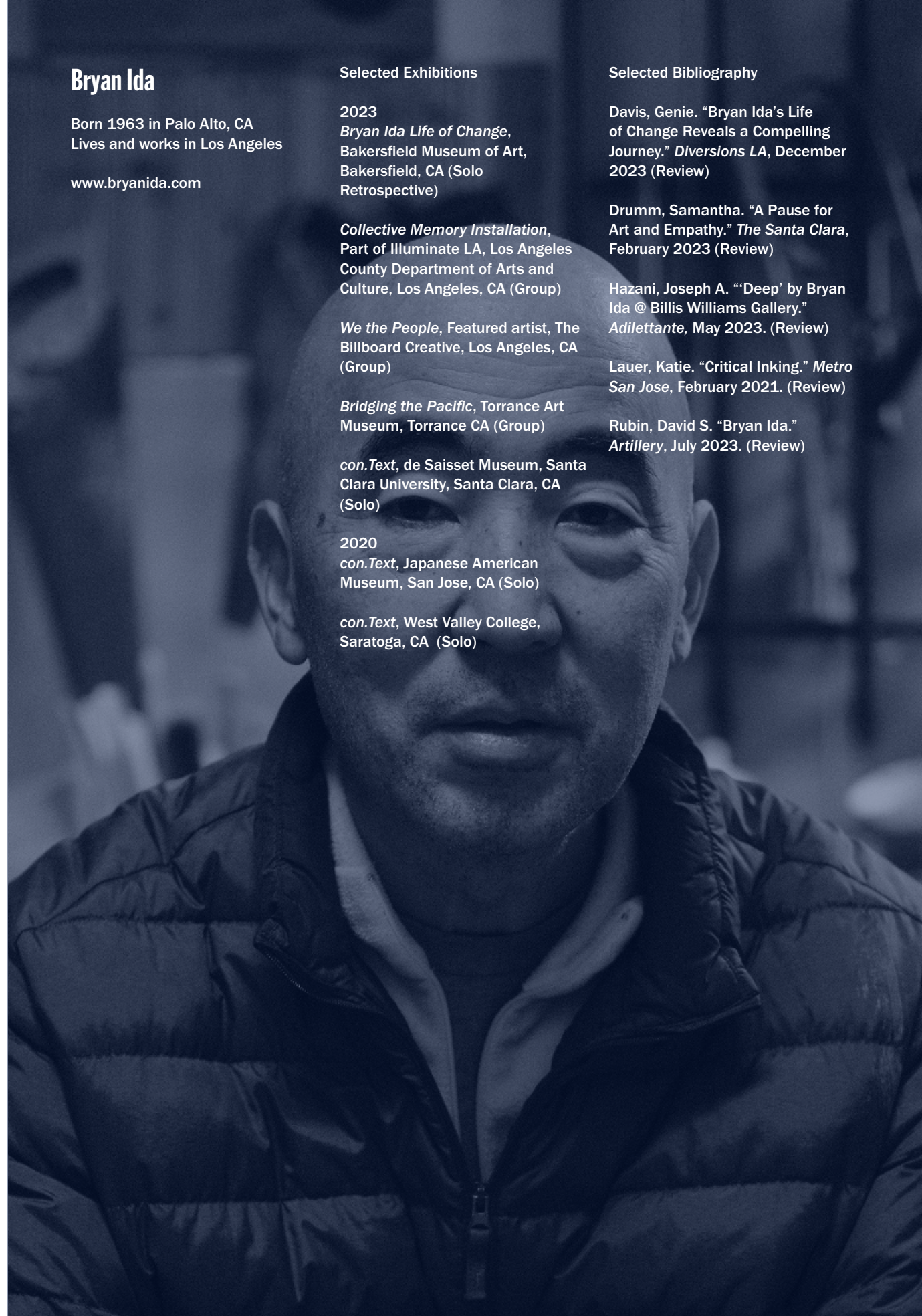
Davis, Genie. "Bryan Ida's Life
of Change Reveals a Compelling
Journey." *Diversions LA*, December
2023 (Review)

Drumm, Samantha. "A Pause for
Art and Empathy." *The Santa Clara*,
February 2023 (Review)

Hazani, Joseph A. "'Deep' by Bryan
Ida @ Billis Williams Gallery."
Adilettante, May 2023. (Review)

Lauer, Katie. "Critical Inking." *Metro
San Jose*, February 2021. (Review)

Rubin, David S. "Bryan Ida."
Artillery, July 2023. (Review)





Carmen Argote

The work is thus rooted in dreaming, memory, childhood fantasies, familial relationships, and the “play” of art making.

Outside In

Carmen Argote's COLA installation invites visitors to engage with various sensory experiences, including the smell of pine needles, the intermittent sounds of rolling concrete cylinders, and the images of bodies and objects moving across a three-channel video. Argote conceived the installation from a dream she had soon after her mother moved in with her to her home studio. Central to the installation, the three-channel video includes montages of the artist, her mother (also named Carmen), and her sister Alex lying on the home studio floor, a palimpsest of smears, splatters, handprints, and footprints of paint from Argote's studio practice. The work is thus rooted in dreaming, memory, childhood fantasies, familial relationships, and the “play” of art making.

In various states of dress and undress, Carmen, Carmen, and Alex pose as if at rest or asleep, holding one another, and reaching out to gently touch a head, a hand, or a hip. In one shot, all three form a spoon shape, skin upon skin; in another, Argote wraps her arms around her mother's torso, holding her close; and in another, she turns away from her sister, as if in their shared childhood bed, and masturbates. Challenging white heteropatriarchal ideologies of the nuclear family, Argote asks us to imagine the ways in which families engage intimacy and tenderness otherwise, be it in structures of cohabitation, dynamics of care, or systems of support amongst family of origin, queer family, or other forms of chosen family.

The home, the park, and the cityscape enter the space in condensed forms. The video work, framing the home studio, rests on the floor surrounded by pine needles that trace the shape of the gallery. Argote gathered the pine needles from the perimeter of Barnsdall Park, bringing reference to the exhibition site and its exterior inside. Concrete testing cylinders, which Argote found in her backyard, sit idly in their minimalism in the gallery space; the same cylinders roll through segments of the video. Concrete cylinders, for Argote, have a particular resonance with Los Angeles, especially its East Side neighborhoods. Argote has long been preoccupied by the Los Angeles cityscape, its architectural spaces, and the discarded materials of its streets. During her walking practice, which she has cultivated over many years living in the neighborhoods of Lincoln Park and Boyle Heights, she noticed the ubiquity of concrete cylinders and the ways in which

people repurposed them for plant beds, fences, or stairs. Argote sees such forms and their uses as part of what she calls the “visual language of place,” a concept that echoes throughout her oeuvre.

The language of place is inextricable from the bodies that dwell within it. In another component of the installation, a textile made of high visibility screen mesh hangs over the window in the gallery. This same material appears in the video work in the form of a jumpsuit worn by the artist. This is the first time Argote has taken up sewing. In the past, it was her mother's hand who helped her with the sewn components of her work. Since living with her mother over the past several months, she has now learned the skill herself, taught by her mother who in turn was taught by her mother. To make the textile, Argote sewed hundreds of pockets out of the mesh material and placed a handful of pine needles in each one. The pine needles sit in their pockets secured and exposed, contained and piercing through, obscured and on view, inside the gallery and up against the window to the outside. Argote works with perimeters, pockets, frames, and cylinders not to restrict, measure, and test, but rather to recognize the shifts, porosity, and vulnerability inherent in our relationships to others and to the world.

Mary McGuire



Stills from
Dream Sequence
 Documented by:
 Audrey Medrano

*watermelons, no catchies
or bouncies: Painting for an exterior
wall, 2014. Paint, dirt on canvas,
72 x 84 x 1.5 in Photo:
Commonwealth and Council*

*720 Sq. Feet: Household
Mutations, Gallery G727, 2010*





Carmen Argote

Born 1981 in Guadalajara, Mexico
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

Education

MFA, University of California, Los Angeles, 2007

BA, University of California, Los Angeles, 2004

www.carmenargote.com

Public Collections

El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY
Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA
Kadist Art Foundation
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA
Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA

Selected Exhibitions

2024
Flow States – LA TRIENAL, El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY (group)

Holding, Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles, CA

Experimentations: The Art of Controlled Procedures, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2023
I won't abandon you, I see you, we are safe, Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

2022
Filtration System for a Processed-based Practice, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA

2021
Be Loved, Primary, Nottingham, UK

Evidence, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (group)

2020
Glove Hand Dog, Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles, CA

Me At Market, Visual Arts Center, University of Texas, Austin, TX

2019
As Above, So Below, New Museum, New York, NY

Manéjese Con Cuidado, PAOS, Guadalajara, Mexico

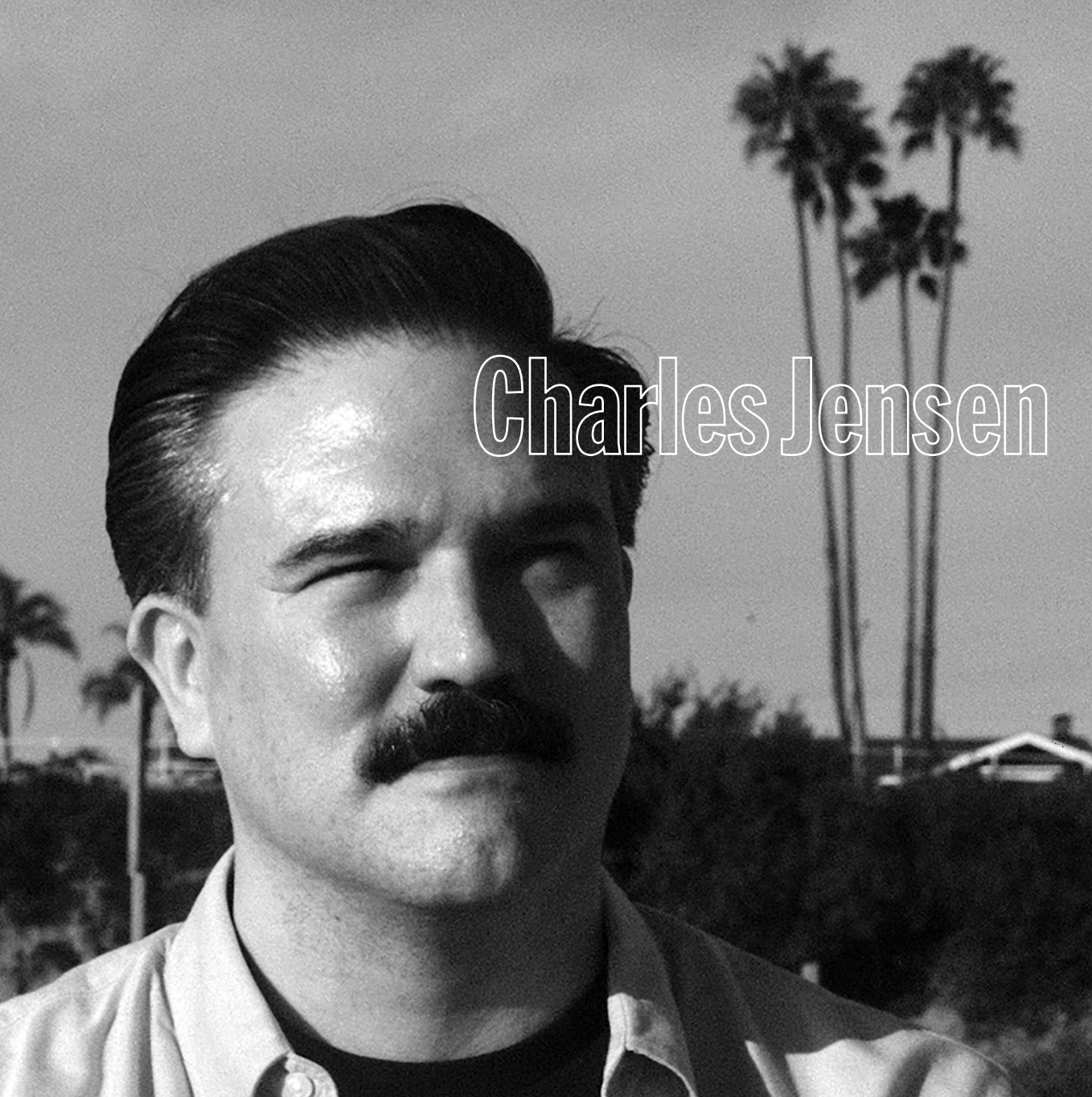
Searching the Sky for Rain, Sculpture Center, Long Island City, NY (group)

2018
Made in L.A. 2018, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (group)

Opposite:

Other, Other, 2022
Oak galls, oak gall dye, gel medium, linen, 80 x 87 x 4 inches
Photo: Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

Installation view: *Made in LA*, Hammer Museum, 2018
Platform with mobile unit (wall), 2017 and *Filtration System for a process-based practice*, Coffee, Paper, canvas, pigments. Photo: Hammer Museum



Charles Jensen

Charlie's poems are the product of a profound curiosity and a free-ranging imagination. Who are we as a culture, who am I as part of that culture, who are you?

Widely published and a recipient of many prizes, Charles “Charlie” Jensen was designated a Cultural Trailblazer by the City of Los Angeles in 2020. Two recent books—one of poetry, one of prose—prove that Los Angeles got it right, for in each he is unrestrained by notions of genre and form, and the results are brilliant. Not only is Charlie a tireless writer, but he is committed to bringing others along and encouraging their creative efforts as director of UCLA Extension’s Writing Program. In that capacity, he has been a builder of community where poets, novelists, screenwriters, memoirists, and other creatives share their knowledge with those who have much to say and are looking to learn the craft that will allow them to do so.

First, Charlie the poet. *Instructions Between Takeoff and Landing* is an innovative collection of poems that draws on the forms and rituals of our culture and contemplates what they tell us about ourselves. There is a poem about the so-called Miranda warning given to arrestees with key words left out, poems based on real estate come-ons, TV glut, a feature in an old *Life* magazine instructing women how to undress in front of their husbands. Particularly thought-provoking are poems that set up an interaction with the reader, for example, “Response Requested: Survey of American Attitudes” to elicit readers’ responses of “more” or “less” to various propositions. There is also a series of “Story Problems” structured like the all-too-easily remembered school tests. The series contains a short narrative paragraph followed by questions in the form of “Quiz on this Section,” designed to provoke readers to think more deeply on a particular subject. The level of intelligence, humor, and insight is high in these poems, and after impressing you with that, Charlie can turn around and break your heart with the spare beautiful poems on the death of his mother (“Hospice”). Charlie’s poems are the product of a profound curiosity and a free-ranging imagination. Who are we as a culture, who am I as part of that culture, who are you? Charlie’s gift as a poet is to stir up, to intrigue, to invite in. The reader cannot help but engage.

And then there is Charlie the memoirist in *SplICE of Life—A Memoir in 13 Film Genres*. The family Betamax in rural Wisconsin brought the world to Charlie in the form of movies. As he writes, movies did not just provide entertainment—they offered real lives he was living. Fast forward to this, his first memoir, a sort of hybrid work of art for which he has devised an innovative structure,

braiding together particular experiences of his life with vivid analyses of particular movies. Who would have thought that *Scream* would be a perfect fit for his experience of coming out as queer during the AIDS crisis. “But of course!” you say when he pairs *Hunger Games* with his experience as a *Jeopardy!* contestant. Charlie is a born storyteller with vivid descriptive powers that put you on a street in Tombstone, Arizona or in the lobby of the “brass and beige glamor” of a Doubletree Hotel lobby, or in the caves of *The Descent* where darkness and claustrophobic spaces wear on the characters the way grief does—in movies and in life. *SplICE of Life* is not just a smart and wonderfully carried-out concept of a book. It is a deeply moving story of what it was like for a young queer person to come of age and into his own in a certain era, told in a way that is fresh and surprising.

Finally, Charlie’s gifts to the broader literary community. Although those gifts are many, we know him best in this regard from his job as Director of UCLA Extension’s Writing Program. Alison Turner as a poetry student, Lou Mathews as a teacher of fiction writing. As Lou shares:

I started teaching in the Writers’ Program in 1989. It’s always been recognized as the strongest Extension Writing Program in the country, for good reason. Charlie took over the program in late 2016 and initially, I was not sure what to expect. I loved working for the former director, Linda Venis, but within the year, I got comfortable when I saw how hard Charlie worked and how effective he was. Over the next few years he instituted some important new programs, the Editing & Publishing Certificate program and the WP NOW membership program, which focuses on professional development. He created a great podcast *The Write Process* and revived a Writers’ Program Literary Magazine tradition with *Southland Alibi* (wonderful title), something we hadn’t had since the glory days of *Westword* in the 1990s.

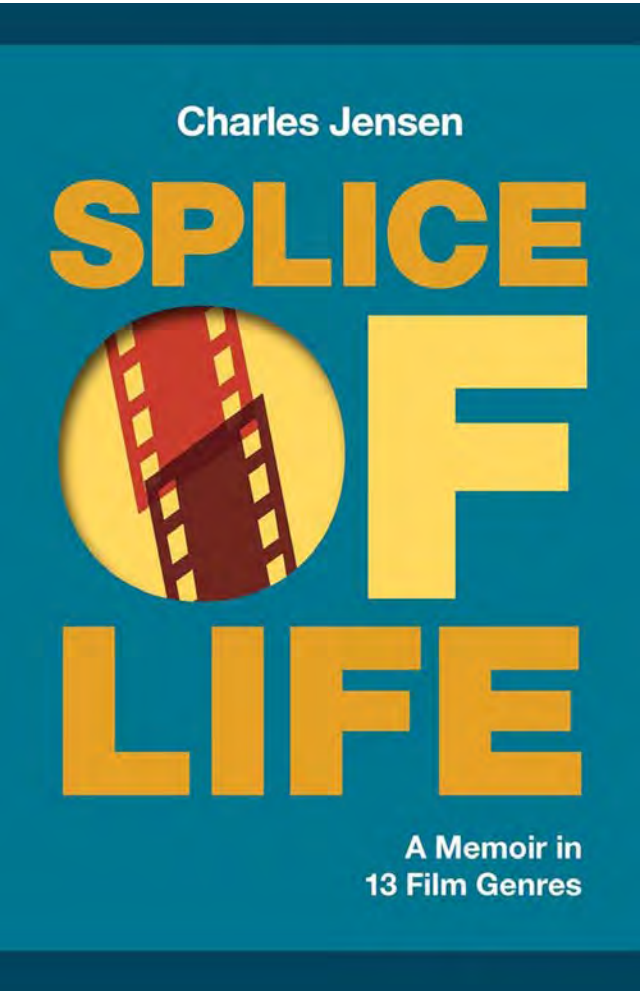
Then the COVID pandemic in 2020, and that was when I saw Charlie at his best. While other programs, and even the Mothership, floundered a bit, trying to figure out how to respond and what to do next, the Writers’ Program made the transition to online/zoom classes

seamlessly. Instructors got all the coaching and online help they needed to conduct their classes, even the least computer competent, thanks to WP staff.

The program thrived and doubled in size in enrollments and revenue. What Charlie said at the time was this: “I think the shock and isolation that Covid created made many, many people reorganize their priorities. They realized how important it was to express themselves in writing and pursue a dream of producing work they were proud of. Zoom made attending classes easier for more people. A workshop is a community, and during Covid, people needed that more than ever.”

There’s one more thing that I cannot overstate. It makes an incredible difference, to me to have a fellow writer, and by that, I mean a fellow weirdo, a poet, a literary wastrel like me in charge. Yes, he’s an incredibly efficient administrator, a well-organized developer of courses and programs, but he also gets lost in language the same way I do, and he can be stopped dead by a great poem, story or novel. He still has that love for language, and you can never overvalue that. It makes the Writers’ Program a great place to work and it’s why I’m still there.

Alison Turner
Lou Mathews



Cover art, *Splice of Life: A Memoir in 13 Film Genres*
Photo: Santa Fe Writers’ Project

POEM IN WHICH WORDS HAVE BEEN LEFT OUT

—*After the Miranda Rights, established 1966*

You have the right to remain
anything you can and will be.

An attorney you cannot afford will
be provided to you.

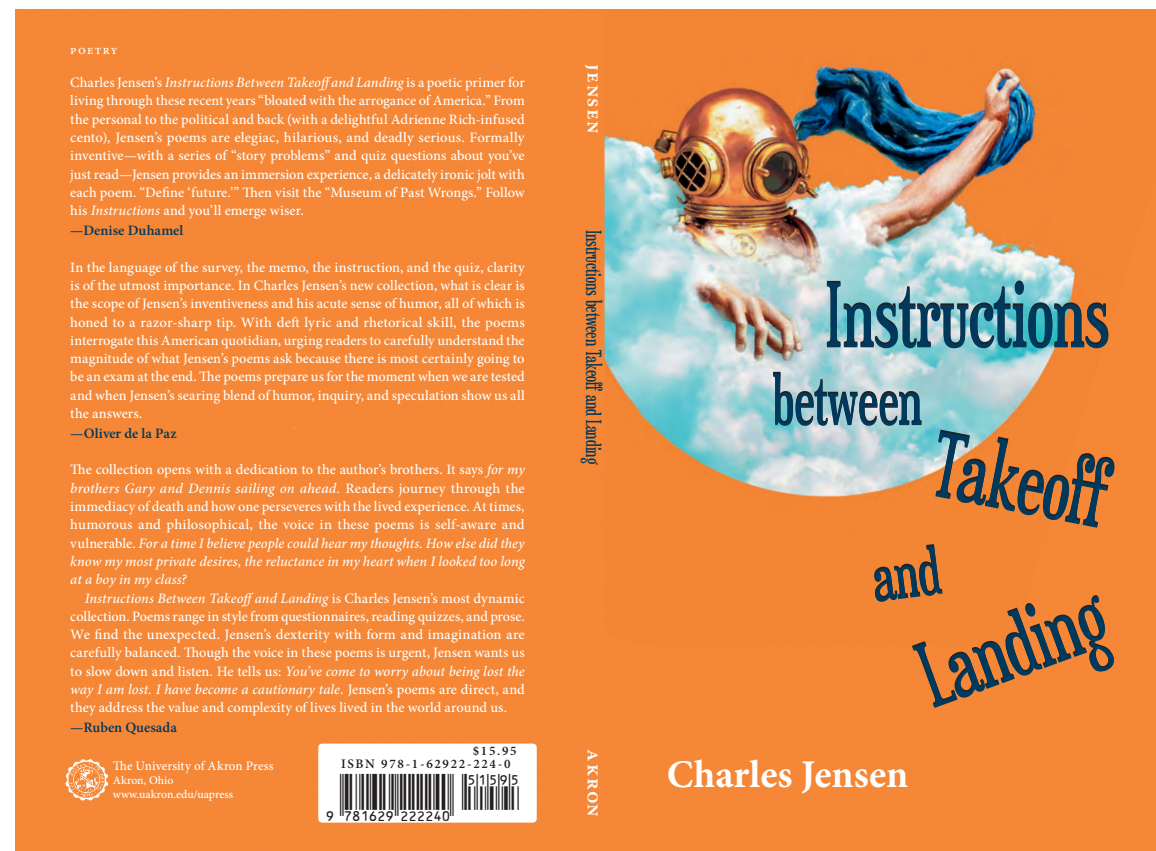
You have silent will.
You can be against law.
You cannot afford one.

You remain silent. Anything you say
will be provided to you.

The right can and will be
against you. Have anything you say
be right. Anything you say
can be right. The right remain silent.

You will be held. You will be
provided. You cannot be you.

From *Instructions between Takeoff and Landing* (University of Akron Press, 2022)



Cover art, *Instructions between Takeoff and Landing*
Photo: University of Akron Press

Opposite:
Charles Jensen signs books at
Changing Hands Bookstore
in Phoenix, 2024.
Photo: Bill Greening



Charles Jensen

Born 1977 in Eagle, Wisconsin

MFA, Creative writing, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, 2004

BA, Film studies and Cultural Studies & Comparative Literature, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, 1999

www.charles-jensen.com

Selected Publications

2024
Splice of Life: A Memoir in 13 Film Genres, Santa Fe Writers Project

2022
Instructions between Takeoff and Landing, University of Akron Press

2018
Nanopedia, Tinderbox Editions

2017
Story Problems, Palooka Press

2016
Breakup/Breakdown, Five Oaks Press

2009
The First Risk, Lethe Press

2007
The Strange Case of Maribel Dixon, DIAGRAM/New Michigan Press

2006
Living Things, Thorngate Road

2005
Little Burning Edens, Red Mountain Review

Opposite:
Charles Jensen reads from
Splice of Life at the
Skirball Cultural Center, 2023.
Photo: Bill Greening



A portrait of Flora Kao, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue top. She is looking slightly to her right with a gentle smile. The background is a wall covered with blue-toned photographs and cyanotypes, some of which are pinned with wooden clothespins.

Flora Kao

Kao's most recent work takes this mysterious dynamic quite literally—being a suite of cyanotypes and textiles based on photos of her family from their lives in Taiwan, lifetimes ago.

Boundless Histories

Flora Kao's inventive and soulful interdisciplinary work always begins in the past. That's because history, like memory, is societal, generational, historical, ever-present, familial, individual, malleable, enshrined, stochastic, and somatic. We each carry it all with us, in consciousness and in our cells, in a way that transcends time and place. As Margaret Atwood wrote, "Nothing goes away," and yet it takes great intentionality to deeply engage with our histories. In modern life, it can be a challenge to sit patiently with the past, at the threshold of life and death, in the presence of the departed or the departing, along the continuum of loss, mourning, and hope—with the weight of the present day and the business of living on your mind. For Kao, the most powerful armature for this kind of space-holding exists and is expressed through hand-wrought rituals of remembrance and repetition, perennially informed by ancestral tradition, even as it is anchored in her own lived experience.

Kao is widely known for her striking works creating canvas "paintings" by a labor-intensive process of direct, life-size rubbings of meaningful locations—think gravestone rubbings at old cemeteries, except it's a demolished traditional family home in Taipei, a colonial sugarcane storehouse in Tainan, or a collapsed desert homestead in Wonder Valley. More recently, it was the topography of a rocky beach in San Pedro with its own part to play in the intercontinental story of invasion, immigration, betrayal, and war that informs her Taiwanese family story. Although this technique manifests direct, physical, analog, durational, and specific materiality, it is also mediated, impressionistic, and ghostly. Other sculptural installations have featured monumental crochets, open-weave nets made of common Taiwanese packaging twine which glimmers a radiant, yolky yellow, the Buddhist color of enlightenment. These drawings are emotionally dramatic, both humble and hypnotic; their shadow-castings are quite theatrical, but their process of creation invokes waiting and grieving.

In fact every culture has its rituals around life and death, and every human has their way of surviving grief—like counting the rosary as a shape for Catholic prayer, or sitting shiva for seven days after a Jewish burial. Kao has for her part poetically revisited the Taiwanese Buddhist practice of folding bright saffron-colored origami lotuses as offerings of honor (making and burning 108 each

week for seven weeks after a death, before the cremation of the lotus-covered body on the 49th day). This is a labor-intensive but profoundly meditative process akin to the process of crocheting the nets. In Buddhist funeral tradition, this sacred color further signifies freedom, and from the process flows a liminal state of communion with those that passed, and empathy for the lives they lived. In fact, Kao's most recent work takes this mysterious dynamic quite literally—being a suite of cyanotypes and textiles based on photos of her family from their lives in Taiwan, lifetimes ago.

In *Isla Formosa*, traditional Japanese embroidery patterns are overlaid on family photographs printed on fabric—speaking to the lasting cultural influence of Japanese colonization of Taiwan, as well as to the textile comfort of nostalgia, infusing vintage photographic images with a physicality that grounds them in the shared space of the present. These cyanotypes are pinned to large, contact sun-prints made with her golden crocheted net—casting not shadows this time but what appears like rippling ocean waters, of the kind that surround the island. The small archive of her family photographs offers a unique inside look at life in the old country, in the last century, when everyone was young and beautiful, before it all changed. And yet, her interventions of color and pattern move these compelling narrative images away from her own story and into the wider realm of resonance, eerie nostalgia, and the sparks and elisions that shape everyone's memories. As Kao delves into her own family history, she simultaneously, inextricably unpacks layers of successive Japanese and Chinese colonization that remade the island of Taiwan several times over in the 20th century.

Furthermore, Kao has folded a flight of 756 perfect, yellow origami lotuses—108 for each of the seven family members she has lost. Her installation, *Boundless*, offers the fragile paper blooms as symbols of hope and rebirth, taking shape as an embodied action and a metaphor for all manner of journeys of self-reflection. As her process of exploring foundational human experiences in a language of architecture and space expands and evolves to center on the everyday ancestral magic of the hand-made and meaningful, each aspect of Kao's studio practice continuously reveals itself as interconnected and interdependent. Nothing goes away.

Shana Nys Dambrot



Ilha Formosa, 2025

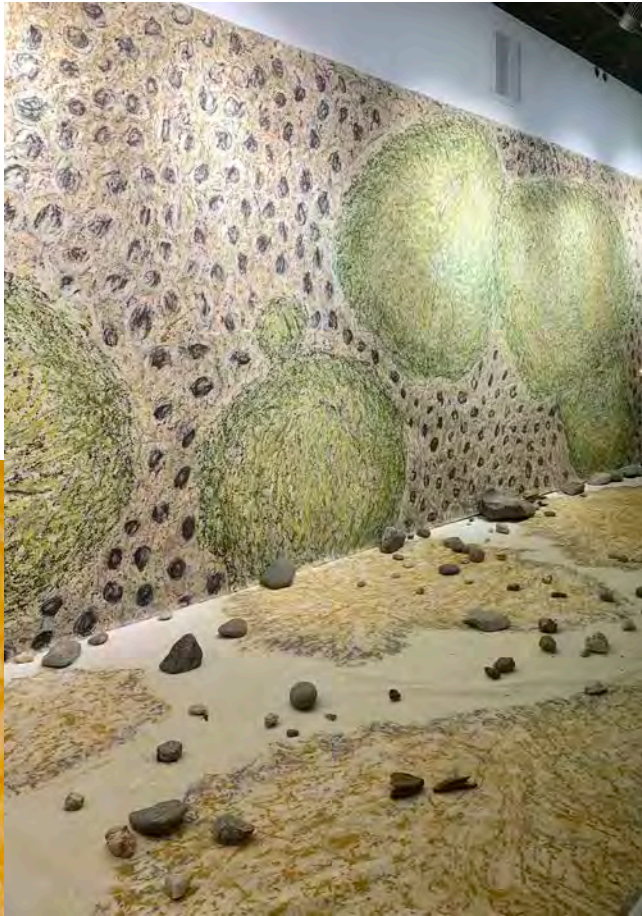
Cyanotype on fabric, 8 x 12 feet (photographs 8.5 x 11 inches each). *Isla Formosa* overlays traditional Japanese embroidery patterns on family photographs from Taiwan's colonial and martial law eras. Scores of photographic cyanotypes are pinned to contact sun prints of my golden crocheted net. The work meditates on memory, change, loss and the legacy of colonization.



Boundless, 2025

Paper and fishing line, variable dimensions.

Boundless features a calligraphic cloud of 756 sacred yellow origami lotus. Rising each morning from the mud, the lotus signifies purity, rebirth, resilience, and enlightenment in Buddhist culture. In Taiwanese Buddhist tradition, grieving family fold and burn 108 origami lotus each week for seven weeks until the cremation on the 49th day. The auspicious blooms pave the path to ascension and enlightenment.



Witness, 2022

Rocks and oil on canvas, 24 x 6 x 6 feet. *Witness* investigates memory and longing thru physical rubbings of site. Exploring touch and bodily knowledge, *Witness* records the natural topography of places where the artist sought solace during intense emotional turmoil and grief such as Descanso Gardens and La Piedra Beach. The expansive rhythm of garden stones and the tenacious beauty of mussel-covered boulders yield safe harbor. Large gestural rubbings anchor these moments of psychological intensity, bearing witness to perseverance and rebirth in the face of catastrophic loss and change.

Hope, 2021

Twine and bamboo leaves. 28 x 15 x 10 feet. In my family's language Taiwanese, the word for "fishnet" sounds the same as "hope." Crocheted from packaging twine, a golden net undulates over a blanket of bamboo leaves. In Buddhist funeral tradition, this sacred color signifies enlightenment and freedom. Bamboo represents strength, tenacity, resilience, and perseverance. Responding to a heartbreaking season of grief and isolation, *Hope* visualizes the expansive connections that encompass us, allowing us to rise and grow again from the ashes.

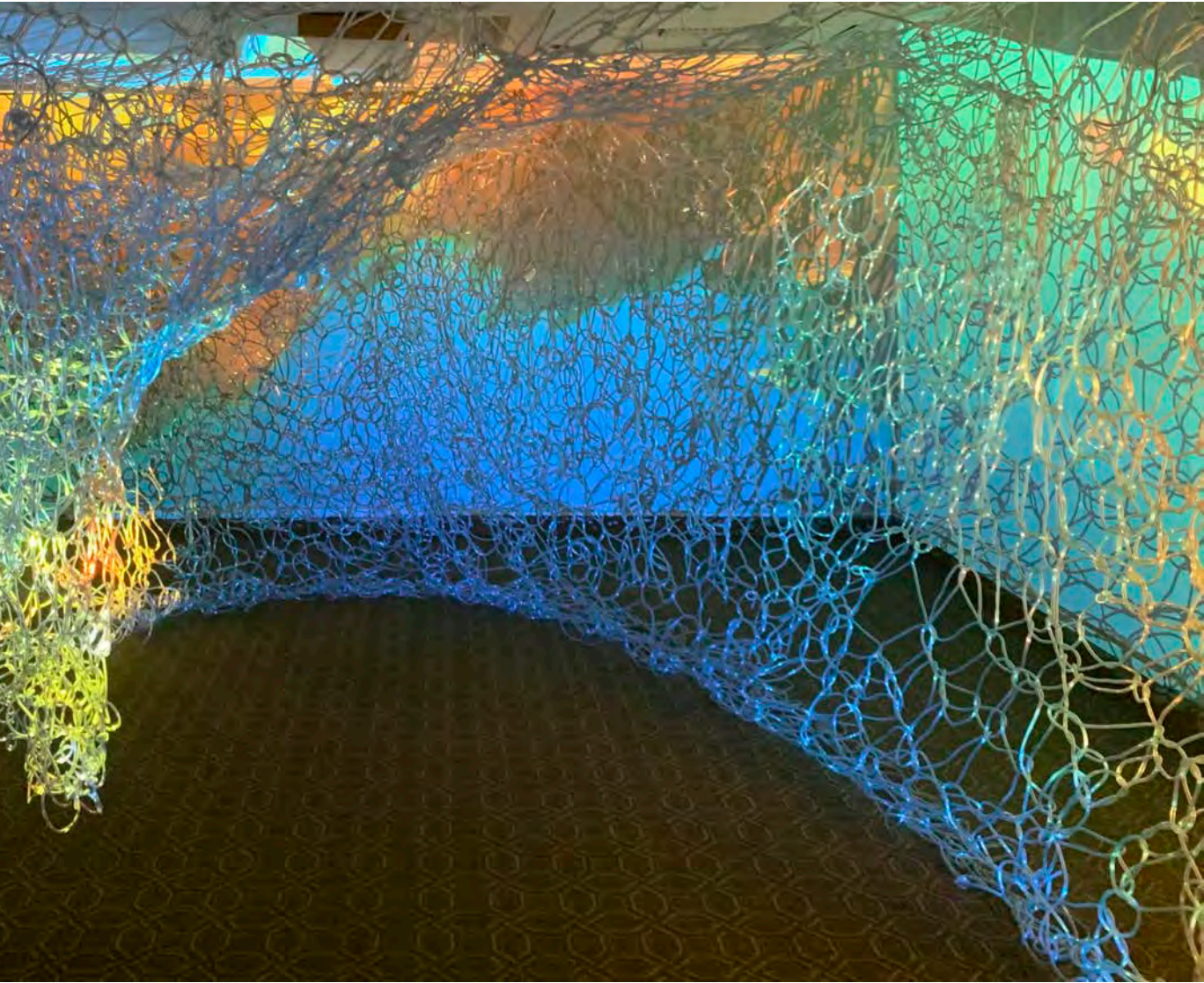


Pyre, 2023

Paper, china silk, and projection, 10 x 17 x 19 feet. *Pyre* features footage of the ritual burning of origami lotus from my grandfather's funeral rites in Taiwan. Accompanied by the sutra chants of Buddhist nuns, projections of fiery flower offerings consume an oversize paper lotus. *Pyre* asks how do we heal after catastrophic loss? How do we move beyond the abyss of grief? Folding an origami lotus is an act of mourning, of seeking solace in meditative task, and healing in the slow act of making and creating beauty. The fragile paper bloom becomes a symbol of hope and rebirth in the face of loss. The lotus in flames is a symbol of cathartic transformation.

In The Deep, 2022
Vinyl tubing and video projection, 21 x 15 x 7 feet. *In the Deep* invites the viewer to explore a grotto crotched from five thousand feet of vinyl tubing. Repeating loops echo the rhythmic patterns of waves and net-making. Holding potent associations with medicine, biotechnology, and life-giving fluids, the vinyl tubing is transformed into a diaphanous net. Video projection of

garibaldi and other fish encountered while snorkeling transforms this cove into a kaleidoscope of underwater wonder. *In the Deep* references the ocean of one's body and mind as well as the vast mysteries of the Pacific.



Flora Kao

Born 1978 in Madison, WI
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

MFA, Studio Art, University of California, Irvine, 2012

BFA, Painting, Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, CA 2008

BA, Environmental Science and Public Policy, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 2000

www.floratkao.blogspot.com

www.instagram.com/florakaoart

www.otis.digication.com/floratkao

Selected Exhibitions

2024
Beyond, LAUNCH LA, Los Angeles, CA (solo)

Art of Healing, Ontario Museum of History and Art, Ontario, CA (group)

2023
The Flower Show, LA Louver, Los Angeles, CA (group)

Notions of Place, Angels Gate Cultural Center, San Pedro, CA (group)

Pyre, Gallery 825/ Los Angeles Artist Association, Los Angeles, CA (solo)

2022
Witness, Cerritos College Art Gallery, Cerritos, CA (solo)

Portal, Geffen Playhouse, Los Angeles, CA (solo)

2021
The Big Embrace, Durden and Ray, Los Angeles, CA (group)

2014
Wind house, abode that a breath effaced, Grand Central Art Center, Santa Ana, CA (solo)

Flora Kao: Homestead, Pasadena Museum of California Art, Pasadena, CA (solo)

Forms of the Formless, Museum of Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (group)

2013
Vestigial, Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles, CA (solo)

Selected Bibliography

Aushenker, Michael. "Her Career is in Ruins." *The Argonaut*, April 16, 2014.

Brumer, Andy. "Flora Kao." *Artscene*, December 2009, 15-16.

Nys Dymbrot, Shana. "Meet Spatial Lyricist Flora Kao." *LA Weekly*, October 3, 2022.

Nys Dambrot, Shana. "Gallery 825: Flora Kao." *Artillery Magazine*, September 27, 2017.

Senn, Evan. "Flora Kao: Grand Central Art Center." *Artillery Magazine*, September 2, 2014.

Wasserman, Martabel. "Flora Kao." *Issue Magazine*, June 3, 2014.



Jemima Wyman

Her works are a means to create a sense of being without form, of melting into your surroundings and contemplating connection.

The logic of a pattern begs the question: what is next? We are taught the rhythms of a pattern as young children, perhaps in the tempo of our day—wakeup, school, home, sleep, and then repeat—or as an entry point into mathematical thinking. There is comfort in patterns, the assurance that the question—what’s next?—has a predictable answer. Yet, what happens when a pattern breaks? When it mutates and infects? Or when it is used as a mode of surveillance and automation? Jemima Wyman’s practice emphasizes pattern in its repetitious form, its associations with the decorative, and its use in the natural and human world as camouflage during our historic moment of overlapping environmental, social, and governmental crises. At such moments the answer to “what’s next?” is thrown into disarray. Yet, Wyman deftly highlights pattern as a chosen strategy to exist within the space of a pattern’s breakdown.

Wyman’s practice adroitly slides between the digital and the material. There is no dualism by splitting the digital cleanly from its confines, only the lateralizing of spaces into patterns without end. Since 2008 she has built her “MAS-archive,” which catalogues images of protesters who camouflage themselves, be it through masks, paint, or smoke. In her densely patterned works, individuals melt into their backdrops. For example, the “Aggregate Icon” series, in which Wyman hand-cuts photos from her archive to create kaleidoscope mandala-like collages of dense repetitious patterns. Staring at these works is mesmerizing. You can lose yourself in these worlds and feel the boundaries of subjectivity melt away. This was a tactic made highly visible by the counterculture’s embrace of psychedelics in the name of expanded consciousness. Individuals such as the psychologist and LSD evangelist Timothy Leary created pattern-drenched interiors as a means of facilitating a psychedelic trip and the death of the ego. The act of surrounding oneself in dense patterns echoes a loss of individual subjectivity and gaining a greater sense of connection to the world.

This strategy of losing one’s sense of subjectivity echoes the beliefs of many of the ecological protesters that Wyman depicts. Analyzing her MAS-archive, she noted that the color blue was commonplace in the body paint and masks of environmental protesters. While the masks serve the prosaic goal of disguising individuals who fear retribution for their participation, it also serves as a clear visual analogy for the loss of subjective boundaries and the interconnected nature of the world. There is one photo from the archive

that depicts protestors painted like schools of fish arranged in a net. The protestors’ bodies blend into each other, loosing humanistic ego and emphasizing a blending of human and more-than-human worlds. By placing images such as these within kaleidoscope-patterns, Wyman recapitulates the spirit of her subjects, the loss of boundaries and an awareness of interconnection.

Yet, Wyman also places herself in a lineage of artists who utilize pattern for its haptic effects. Staring at works from *...like a siren it repeats* exhibition, you’d be forgiven if you feel a sense of bodily unease. This can be a disorienting event, the moment when visual stimuli produce physical effects. In thinking through the bodily impact of pattern, one might consider the stunning and innovative “eye-dazzler” weavings made by Navajo (Diné) women during the decades straddling the turn of the 20th century. This visual tactic was developed in a moment of technical change (the increased availability of synthetically dyed yarn) and cultural trauma (the forced resettlement of the Navajo people by the United States government). We can see it again in the 1960s through the work of Op-Art artists such as Bridget Riley, who was responding to early waves of computer technology and the broader impacts of cybernetic thought. In their insistence on dazzling the eye, we receive the reminder that we are corporeal. This corporeality is emphasized by Wyman’s prolific use of textiles and her nods to the history of the decorative. For example, her series of pattern books recall the history of the decorative arts and the siloing of mediums seen as domestic. Putting these associations within the contexts of protest, change and camouflage allows for both an appreciation for the particularity of this history while she pulls it from margin to center.

In Wyman’s practice, pattern refuses to break cleanly into distinct pieces. We are denied the comfort of an easy answer to “what’s next?” What we gain however is a focused instance on both/and. Her works are a means to create a sense of being without form, of melting into your surroundings and contemplating connection. Yet, in its overall dazzle, it can sting the eye, bring you back to your body. Walking in a textile-drenched space is sensuous; it reminds you of the materiality of life, the drape of cloth over flesh. Her practice is insistent on pattern’s ability to help one exist in pattern’s breakdown.

Kayleigh Perkov



Aggregate Icon (Y&B)...
(unabridged title 504 words), 2019
Hand-cut digital photographs,
79 x 79 inches, Photo: Ed Mumford

Forewarnings (Blue)(top to bottom):
Smoke during a Yellow Vests protest
advocating for social and economic justice, Rennes,
France, 23 February 2019 (blue smoke); Climate
crisis protester advocating for environmental
justice and for concrete actions to be made by
the government against climate change, Buenos
Aires, Argentina, 19 March 2021 (blue hands with
black eyes); Protesters against climate change,
Nantes, France, 15 March 2019 (Earth painted on
two cheeks); Protest organized by "Vegan Impact"
an ecologist association against fishing, Paris,
France, 20 May 2017 (group of bodies painted blue
under black net) and Anti-government protester
advocating for freedom, liberty and fraternity with
their three-finger salute, Bangkok, Thailand, 25
October 2020 (blue blob painted over eye) (detail)



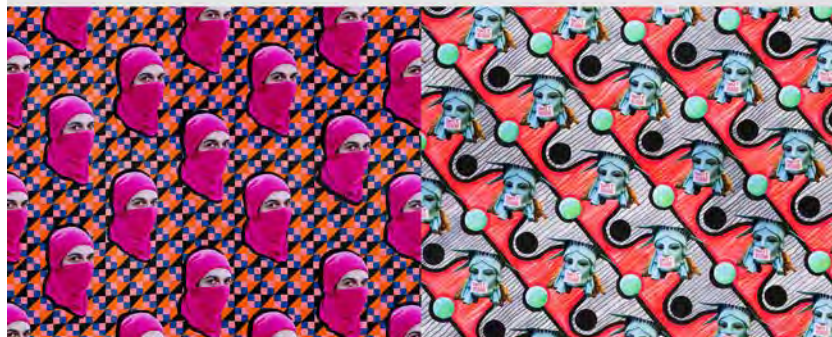


Haze 18...(unabridged title 3949 words), 2023, Hand-cut digital photographs and tape, 46.5 H x 62 W inches. Photo: Ed Mumford

Propaganda Textiles, 2017, custom-made fabric book (including 40 custom-designs with map), Edition of 6 + 2AP, 16 H x 18 W x 1 inches. Photo: Aaron Anderson



Deepsurface and Cautionary Signs (Anonymous March, Los Angeles, USA, March 15, 2008 (Stars), March against Monsanto protesters, Florida, USA, October 12, 2013 (Tie-Dye), Budget-cut protester, London, March 26, 2011 (Cat), Anti-labor Law protester, Paris, France, June 14, 2016 (Stripes), Greenpeace activists against deforestation, Tartagal, Argentina, August 31, 2004 (Jaguar spots), Occupy Wall St protester, New York, USA, October 15, 2011 (Coin), 2018, Painted-photographs, spray-painted tarp, various painted fabric, 125 H x 252.25 W x 1 inches. Photo: Ruben Diaz





Flourish 6... (unabridged title 425 words),
2020, Hand-cut digital photographs on paper,
52 H x 40 W inches. Photo: Ed Mumford

Jemima Wyman

Born 1977 in Sydney, Australia
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

MFA, California Institute of Arts,
Santa Clarita, CA 2007

BA, Visual Arts (Hons), Queensland
University of Technology, Brisbane,
Australia 2001

www.jemimawyman.com

Selected Exhibitions

2024
Atmospheric Disturbances, Sullivan
+ Strumpf, Sydney, Australia (solo)

2023
Refigured, Whitney Museum,
New York City, NY (group)

Story, Place, Frieze No. 9,
Cork Street, London, England
(group)

2022
A Haze Descends, Commonwealth
& Council, Los Angeles, CA (solo)

Redact, Rewrite, Reframe,
ArtCenter College of Design, Los
Angeles, CA (group)

Selected Bibliography

Mizota, Sharon. "Jemima Wyman
Explores the Colorful Aesthetics
of Public protest." Los
Angeles Times, 23 October
2018. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/museums/la-et-cm-jemima-wyman-commonwealth-council-review-20181023-story.html>

Sorkin, Jenni. "Figure/Ground: The
Art of Jemima Wyman." In *Crisis
Patterns*, 2–8. Artspace Mackay,
2024.





Olivia Booth

The reeling Booth's art causes feels like an opportunity to right ourselves again, to return to ourselves not as subject but as ground—not as self, but as a passing reflection.

How do you liberate an image from the banalities of projection? Or from the prescriptions of desire, or even the noble call to beauty? How to shake attention out of its usual resting places so off to the hunt it may go, in hot pursuit of the fresh forms it craves?

One answer: send the eye reeling.

The art of Olivia Booth does so because every one of her gestures is a supposal, and none of her supposals are simply supposed. They are tested via shapes and surfaces, whorls and daubs, ovals and spirals, marks and words. They are cast as sharp hooks to pull at those subtle stitches that hold mind and body together. Her supposals stare down the barrels of big guns like knowledge and certitude and sense in their darkness the pre-inklings of otherworldly phenomena.

Point being, Booth's hand is moved by the spirit of here's what happens if. If paintings can stand on their own two feet. If sculptures can unbind themselves from objecthood. If color is at once an obfuscation and an arcade. If depth is only the measure of our perception. If abstraction is called upon to close the circuit between seeing and believing. If light and shadow were as solid as paper and tape, string and glue, nails and pins. If lines had far more interesting things to do than just lie there. If glass just tricks us mortals into thinking that we can see through things.

Looking at Booth's work, I often think: It is the window and it is the view. And there is no telling which came first. As Gaston Bachelard writes in *The Poetics of Space*, "Through the poet's window the house converses about immensity with the world."¹ Scholar Xiao Situ quotes this line in her essay, "Emily Dickinson's Windows," and notes that the poet's home had seventy-five of them, which may explain how Dickinson so deeply absorbed so many earthly marvels even when she did not leave the house.² Her every glimpse of nature, of her neighborhood, then had a frame around it; I now picture

each of her poems as a single windowpane, something to look at and look through at the same time.

As a material that mimics and feigns immateriality, glass doubles sight this way. Booth not only builds upon its surfaces—some readymade, most made by hand—but also counterbalances glass's transparency with opacity. Bubbles, warps, and other traces of its fabrication keep the eye unbalanced and let the focal points roll around inside the frame. The artist paints on the glass in determined strokes of various thicknesses and velocities, using distinct attacks, adding layers above and below and between to create dimensions that can be hard to parse from one another, hard to know where the mark resides or where it's leaving a shadow. The glass, like a lung, lifts the eye away from the wall, the floor, the stand, allowing light to dart in and out of Booth's works so that they seem as though they could levitate. Puncture points—like the nails and screws and string that seem to penetrate the glass while leaving it whole and unshattered—let some of the air out thus letting the pieces come back down to earth.

Booth's pointed embrace of so-called material imperfection, as well as the ovals and spirals that recur in her works, also call to mind the Indian practice of Tantric painting, a tradition that features spare, colorful geometric shapes on found pieces of paper that used for meditation. For the Tantrika, the painting's purpose is to help them find their way to the divine. Is it surprising that an artist whose work presses the question of "clarity" should also have a spiritual core? The reeling Booth's art causes feels like an opportunity to right ourselves again, to return to ourselves not as subject but as ground—not as self, but as a passing reflection.

Jennifer Krasinski

¹
Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2014. 89

²
Xiao Situ. "Emily Dickinson's Windows," in *Experience*, ed. Alexander Nemerov, Terra Foundation Essays, Vol. 4 (Chicago & Paris: University of Chicago Press; Terra Foundation for American Art, 2017), 52–74



Glint Piece IV, 2025
24.5 x 16.5 x 3 inches, found glass (from I.Trout), paint, wire, nail, wood and plastic frame (thanks to Paradise Framing, LA)

Ojala Piece, 2024
12 x 8 x 1 inches, photo print, paint on plastic and glass, assemblage (from F. Booth), wood and metal frame (thanks to Paradise Framing, LA)

Bathroom Mirror Piece, 2024
32 x 24 x 1 inches, chalk on paper, paint on plastic and melted mirrors, wire and string, Wood and metal frame (thanks to Paradise Framing, LA)



Piranesi's Gimbles, 2005
70 x 4 x 6 inches, glass, paint, wood.
Installed at Mandarin Gallery, LA



Negative Mirror Piece V, 2018
32 x 24 x 1 inches, fused and heated mirror and
acrylic paint. Installed at UrbanGlass, Brooklyn, NY.
Photo credit: Blaine Davis Studio



VW Piece II, 2022
25 x 19 x 2 inches, chalk and charcoal on paper, paint on melted and fused mirrors (with help from Second Best Studio, LA), paint on plastic, wood and metal frame (Paradise Framing, LA); Installed at Monte Vista Projects, LA. Photo: Brica Wilcox

Olivia Booth

Born September 5, 1973 in New York City and lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

MFA, Visual Art, ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena, CA, 2003

BA, Comparative Literature, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 1996

BFA, Painting, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 1996

www.oliviabooth.net

www.thedrawingstudio.info

Selected Exhibitions

2023
Anima Reflections, Monte Vista Projects, Los Angeles, CA

2022
Tongue-Thrusters, Irenic Projects, Altadena, CA

2019
Drawing Through Time, Agnes Varis Gallery, Urban Glass, Brooklyn, NY

2011
Schindler Lab, MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Schindler House, Los Angeles, CA

2007
Unknown Action..., Mandarin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

Selected Bibliography

Pagel, David. "The Elegant Universe." Los Angeles Times, April 19, 2015.

Amelar, Sarah. "Reinterpreting Rudolph Schindler's Home." New York Times, March 9, 2011.

Kushner, Rachel. "First Takes." Artforum, January 2006.





Wilfried Souly

Souly's choreographic worldview is rooted in this belief; that dance is a powerful tool for social commentary and change and, I would argue, to elicit movement building.

The Poetics of Migration, Movement Building, and Dance as Leadership in Social Justice

What if we could, through intentional gathering and collective good will, change what was, and give it different consequences? The choreographic work of Wilfried Souly, affectionately known as “Willy” in the community, is not only driven by this inquiry but serves as fertile ground for exploration and growth, igniting possibilities and fostering a movement in witnesses. The impact of a profound work of art often reveals itself gradually, unfolding in the days that follow. It may wane or thrive, but its essence can inspire a quest for a richer life. Such art becomes a lifelong companion, sustaining us through challenges and igniting fresh aspirations.

Souly's *Saana/The Foreigner* is such a work; it has transcended its time and continues to be as urgent today as when it was made in 2014—my first encounter with his work. A performance of dance, music, and spoken word, it plays with the abandon of liberatory futurity stemming from the social injustice constraints of a lived experience as a Black immigrant man new to the United States. Drawing from traditions from Souly's native Burkina Faso and collaborating with multi-instrumentalists Julio Montero (aka Cuñao) and Tom Moose—both of whom are also immigrants to the United States—Souly weaves a tale of personal journey and of creating a new life in a new land. As the styles of sounds play from avant-garde to South American folk, with hints of Minimalism, *Saana/The Foreigner* shows Souly as a solo dancer being in a new land. Concurrently, on a screen behind him, he projects standard questions posed to immigrants during a border crossing or his eventual U.S. Citizenship interview: What do you do? Why do you want to travel to the U.S.? How will you pay for it? The questions become startlingly more and more invasive, inquiring as to the color of his wife's toothbrush, the size of his and his wife's bed, and who sleeps on which side. The music remains captivating as Souly grows more agitated. His movements shift from confidence to fear and back to confidence. He ends as if standing on the threshold of something new and uncertain. Hope. Hope of a new beginning for him and his future ancestors.

Migration, movement building, and dance are deeply interconnected forces that shape social justice. Migration, both voluntary and forced, has long been a defining characteristic of human history, bringing

cultural exchange, resistance, and adaptation. Movement building emerges from the need for collective transformation, often rooted in the experiences of displaced or marginalized communities. Dance, as an embodied form of resistance and storytelling, plays a crucial role in these movements, serving as both a means of expression and a tool for solidarity—creating space for healing, asserting presence, and forging collective power.

Souly's work is the embodiment of the interconnectedness of the poetics of migration—the act of moving from one place to another as expressed through creative means, often highlighting themes of displacement, loss, identity, and resilience—dance, leading with it to express his lived experience providing a revised or new perspective that can create movement, even if momentary. Social movements rely on bodies in motion—marching, protesting, gathering, and disrupting. Movement building is about collective action, but it is also about the movement of ideas, emotions, and strategies across time and space. Dance, as a practice that centers the body, as Souly does, can become a vital medium in movement building. He transforms the space where the work is performed, resists oppression, and builds community.

Souly's choreographic worldview is rooted in this belief; that dance is a powerful tool for social commentary and change and, I would argue, to elicit movement building. He uses dance to explore themes like race, identity, and colonialism, to transform lived experiences into compelling narratives that challenge societal norms. He leans in, through means of experimentation, to examine the struggles of marginalized communities and the complexities of Identity. Through Souly's expertise as a multifaceted dancer, drummer, and Taekwondo master, as well as early training in both African traditional and contemporary dances he is well versed to make impactful performance experiences that stays and changes with you. It is to no surprise that Souly has thus become a prominent figure in contemporary African dance, contributing uniquely to the art form's evolution and global recognition. His distinct background, artistic approaches, and cultural influences have shaped his choreographic works, reflecting the rich diversity of African dance traditions and their contemporary interpretations.

With each subsequent work after *Saana/The Foreigner*, Souly's work continues to be at the forefront of developing and constructing new creative models of mobilizing



"On Becoming", Dance/Choreography
by Wilfried G Souly, Presented as
part of REDCAT's New Original Works Festival,
2016. Photo: Steve Gunther, © CalArts

"Mask/Her", Dance for Camera Project,
Choreography by Wilfried G Souly,
May 2025, Camera, Video Edit & Photo:
Cecilia Slongo

through performance and dance practice that connect new choreographic interdisciplinary practices with the communities Souly represents and beyond. Souly exhibits an extraordinary vision to conceive, develop, and execute a new way of living and experiencing through performance while advocating and imagining a more just society. These transgressive qualities deeply align with the social movements needed as we move towards an uncertain political terrain in the US and across the globe. We will require the

much-needed intentional gathering space, in community, to elicit, dream, and change what was, what is, and give it different consequences. That is what "Willy" does so innately.

Edgar Miramontes





"Saana/The Foreigner," Dance/Choreography by Wilfried G Souly, Presented as part of Black Dances @ WAA, Nate Holden Theater Los Angeles CA, August 2019, Photo: George Simian

"Saana/The Foreigner," Dance/Choreography by Wilfried G Souly, Presented as part of REDCAT's New Original Works Festival, 2014. Photo: Steve Gunther, © CalArts



"Unsung," Dance/Choreography by Wilfried G Souly, Presented as part of Festival Dialogues de Corps, December 2023, Ouagadougou BFA, Photo: Wilfried G Souly



Wilfried G Souly

Born 1979 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

MFA, Choreographic Inquiry, UCLA World Arts & Cultures/Dance, Los Angeles, CA, 2021

BA, Dance, UCLA World Arts & Cultures/Dance, Los Angeles, CA, 2019

www.wsouly.com

Selected Exhibitions/ Performances/Presentations

2024
Ancestral Thread, UCLA World Arts & Cultures/Dance Faculty work in progress, Los Angeles, CA, June, 2024 (Group)

2023
Unsung, a choreographic response to the oppression and marginalization of Black bodies. Dance/Choreography by Wilfried G Souly. Dialogues de Corps Festival, Ouagadougou, BFA, December (Group)

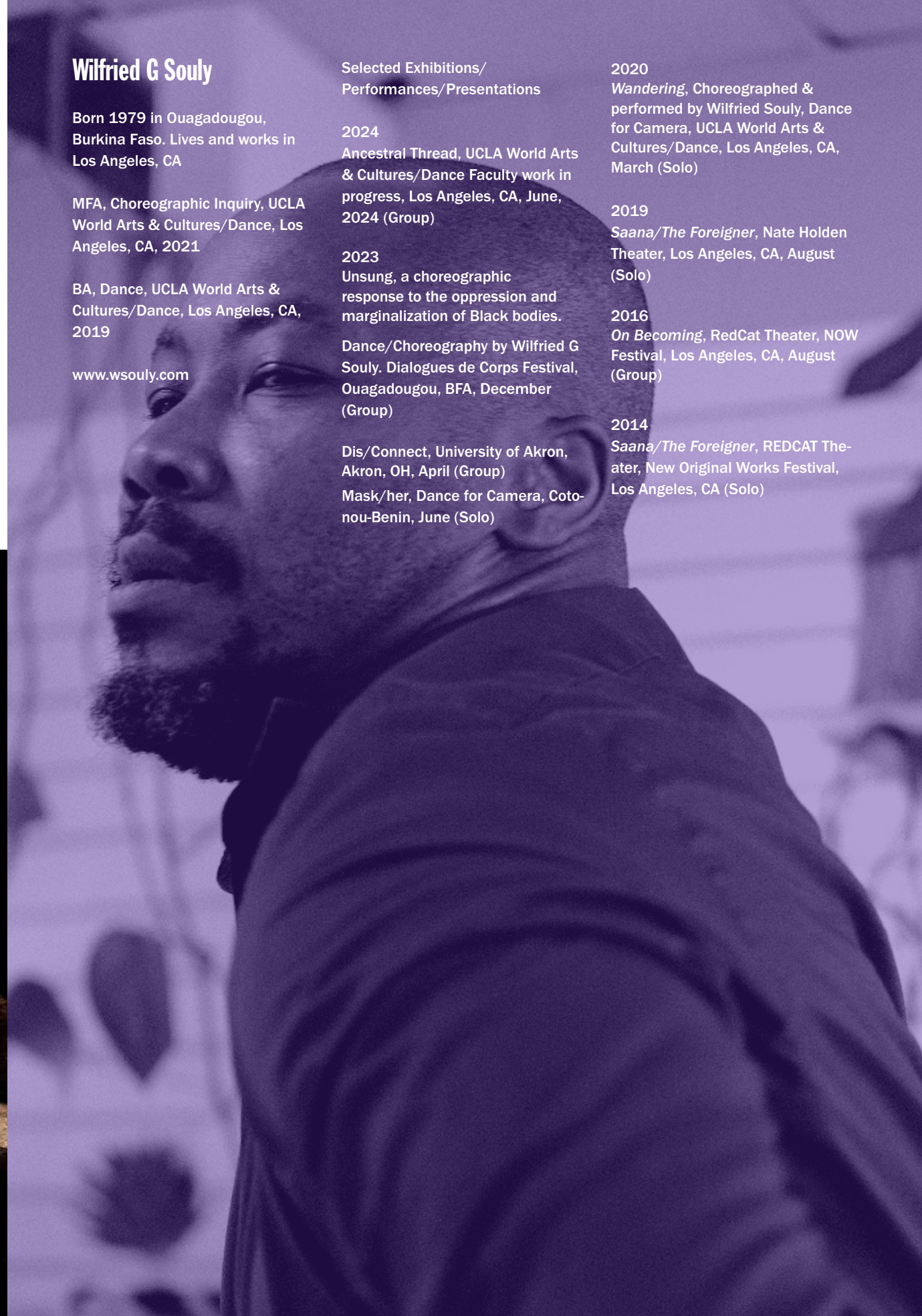
Dis/Connect, University of Akron, Akron, OH, April (Group)
Mask/her, Dance for Camera, Cotonou-Benin, June (Solo)

2020
Wandering, Choreographed & performed by Wilfried Souly, Dance for Camera, UCLA World Arts & Cultures/Dance, Los Angeles, CA, March (Solo)

2019
Saana/The Foreigner, Nate Holden Theater, Los Angeles, CA, August (Solo)

2016
On Becoming, RedCat Theater, NOW Festival, Los Angeles, CA, August (Group)

2014
Saana/The Foreigner, REDCAT Theater, New Original Works Festival, Los Angeles, CA (Solo)





Yozmit The DogStar

The performance work I do to restore balance between The Feminine and The Masculine is an attempt to elevate collective consciousness by transcending gender and expanding my visibility and message across all possible channels.

“I have had many deaths of consciousness in my life. Each time it has been like waking up from a nap filled with intense, colorful, lucid dreams and feeling the ripples of that experience for the rest of the day. I have gone through a major change almost every ten years, including a major and mysterious childhood illness, changing my country of residence in my teens, my career multiple times and, finally, from boy to girl.”

—Yozmit The DogStar, *Timid Magazine*, May 2020

Yozmit The DogStar’s art dissolves the boundaries between the artist and the work, inviting us into otherworldly realms. Her ambient performances alter our acts of viewing, shifting them into sensory experiences that rearrange perception itself. Moving shrouded in layers of fabric and sound, she becomes a portal. In public spaces like the WeHo Pride Art Festival in Los Angeles, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, and the streets of Seoul, she walks meditatively, wrapped from head to toe in blends of Victorian and classic Korean feminine dress adorned with futuristic emblems. The outlandish bulbs and crevices of her costuming challenge the impulse to categorize gender, dispersing that desire across a variety of textures.

In her evocative 2012 opening gala performance, *Sound of New Pussy*, at the New Music Seminar in New York City, Yozmit used an enormous mesh skirt and a computerized screen displaying a pair of red lips to stage the instability of femininity as a fixed signifier. She kept our vision fluctuating between surface and depth, lingering in the (in) visible. The work unsettled the presumed alignment of gender and sex, along with the negative social value assigned to the feminine. By returning image, sound, and movement to the senses, *Sound of New Pussy* rearranged the perceptual order of the body, opening space for new values to emerge in what has been historically assigned to “lower” genders and sexes.

Yozmit, whose self-given name means “myth about one’s self,” has cultivated her ritualistic performance art through training in fashion, singing-songwriting (including traditional Korean Pansori and Gayageum-Byungchang), dance, theater, and Buddhist shamanism. The multisensory ambience of her artwork draws not only from this vast transdisciplinary reach but also from her lived experience at the borders of national, colonial, and racial systems of cisheteropatriarchy. She traces these experiences intergenerationally:

“My voice as an artist comes from my mother. She wanted to be a singer when she was in high school but, in conservative 1950s Korea, being a female singer was tantamount to being a prostitute.

Nevertheless, she secretly sang after school at a jazz club on the American army base near her home. When her brother found out, she was stopped publicly and violently. Her actions were considered a shame to the family name. Shortly after this incident, she married my father and became a housewife. A few years later, I was born.”

—Yozmit The DogStar, *Timid Magazine*, May 2020

Yozmit’s own struggles with gender-based discrimination, harassment, and abuse as a Korean migrant between the United States and South Korea echo her mother’s. Her multitone trans voice, claimed both for and from her mother, animates the otherworldly dimensions of her performances.* Her multisensory works, infused with this matrilineal voice, resist binary gender classifications, expanding the possibilities of embodied expression.

Her more recent musical performance art project, *Effervescent* (2024), explores the spiritual undercurrents that pulse through her work. Created in collaboration with her Los Angeles-based trans* nonbinary choir community, the video features Yozmit submerged in water, her body enveloped in sequined, sheer fabric as light and bubbles refract around her. In this fluid space, she becomes disembodied, transmuting into liquid itself—her transformation heightened by the effervescent harmonies of her choir. In this dissolution of form, gender, body, and self rise and merge with other beings and elements, gesturing toward collective transcendence.

For Yozmit, gender is both a site of struggle and a channel for transformation:

“The performance work I do to restore balance between The Feminine and The Masculine is an attempt to elevate collective consciousness by transcending gender and expanding my visibility and message across all possible channels. Sexual energy, the most primal creative energy, can be constructive if channeled correctly; otherwise, it leads to destruction, which the world is facing at this moment in history. I believe embracing the duality of gender is the gateway for all of us to understand oneness, equality, compassion, and peace on earth.”

— Yozmit The DogStar

Jian Neo Chen



"DogStar" Music Video Shoot, 2025, Los Angeles.

A Song of Liberation

Inspired by Sirius, the brightest star, DogStar is a celestial prayer for awakening. Through Yozmitoile—my reimagined Toile de Jouy woven with my trans migration story, prayers, and healing spells—I reclaim a fabric of oppression and transform it into liberation. The fabric becomes my costume, the costume carries the song, and the song becomes my body—a cycle of storytelling, from spirit to sound to matter.

Performance: Yozmit the DogStar & Lena Fumi
 Costume: Yozmit in Yozmitoile
 Photo: Miida Chu

WALK Performance N° 24 in SEAMS during WeHo Pride Arts Festival 2022, Los Angeles. Photo: Stephen LaReign, Hues Photography



Performance at The Vincent Price Art Museum Gala, Los Angeles 2023. A live musical performance by Yozmit and her 4-piece band, captured during the gala. Photo: Miida Chu.





Yozmit The DogStar

Born 1970 in Seoul, South Korea
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

Education

AA, Fashion Design, Fashion
Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM), Los Angeles, CA
1993

www.yozmit.com

Selected Performances and Exhibitions

2024
Effervescent, Transgender Initiative
Grant Project, The Connie Norman
Transgender Empowerment Center
(CONOTEC), Los Angeles, CA

2023
AHL Foundation Annual Gala
Performance, New York, NY
Vincent Price Museum Gala
Performance, Los Angeles, CA

2022
SEAMS, WeHo Pride Arts Festival,
Los Angeles, CA

CURE, Realm Gallery, Los Angeles,
CA (Group)

SYZYGY, Advocate and Gochis
Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (Group)

TRANSPRIDE Performance,
Renberg Theater, Los Angeles, CA

2021
Pride Publics Performance,
One Archives Foundation,
Los Angeles, CA

2019
Yozmit Performance and
Installation, Google Quantum AI
Seminar, Santa Barbara, CA

DoYou: Hathorian Hymns, One City
One Pride Arts Festival Grant
Project, Los Angeles, CA

2018
*DoYou: Memoirs of Promethean
Sisters*, One City One Pride Festival
Grant Project, Los Angeles, CA
Ain't I A Womxn, LA Freewave,
Los Angeles, CA

2017
DoYou: Migration of The Monarchs,
Hollywood Fringe Festival,
Transgender Initiative Grant Project,
Los Angeles, CA

2015
*Queens Museum Annual Gala
Performance*, Queens, New York, NY

2013
Life Ball Performance, Vienna,
Austria

Selected Bibliography

Ivo, Ruth. "Performance." *Coronet
Books*, May 2024.

Wong, Young Tseng. "Yozmit the
DogStar." *Timid Magazine*, May
2020. [https://www.timidmag.com/
features/yoymit-the-dogstar](https://www.timidmag.com/features/yoymit-the-dogstar)

Chen, Jian Neo. "Trans Exploits:
Trans of Color Cultures and
Technologies in Movement." Duke
University Press. November 2019.

DeGolyer, Lori. "Yozmit:
Embodiment And Metamorphosis."
Art Papers, August 2019. [https://
www.artpapers.org/yoymit-embodi-
ment-and-metamorphosis/](https://www.artpapers.org/yoymit-embodiment-and-metamorphosis/)

Opposite:

WALK Performance N° 15,
Las Vegas, 2016
Photo: Jacqueline Pichardo

Solo Exhibition and Performance
during Carson Arts Gallery Residency,
Los Angeles, 2023. Photo: Brian Carr



COLA History 2019–2025

2024 COLA Artists

Jane Brucker
Jay Carlon
Mariah Garnett
Janna Ireland
Gina Loring
Sehba Sarwar
Debra Scacco
Chris Wabich
Dorian Wood
Bari Zipperstein

2023 COLA Artists

Daniel Corral
Patricia Fernández
Wakana Kimura
Michael Massenburg
Alia Mohamed
Jasmine Orpilla
Duane Paul
Elyse Pignolet
Kyungmi Shin
David Ulin

2022 COLA Artists

Najite Agindotan
Nancy Baker Cahill
Sharon Louise Barnes
Shonda Buchanan
Suchi Branfman
Jibz Cameron
York Chang
Danny Jauregui
Yoshie Sakai

2021 COLA Artists

Neel Agrawal
Noel Alumit
Edgar Arceneaux
Maura Brewer
Nao Bustamante
Jedediah Caesar
Neha Choksi
Michael Datcher
Sarah Elgart
Lia Halloran
Phung Huynh
Farrah Karapetian
Ruben Ochoa
Umar Rashid

2020 COLA Artists

Tanya Aguiñiga
Amir H. Fallah
YoungEun Kim
Elana Mann
Hillary Mushkin
Alison O'Daniel
Vincent Ramos
Steven Reigns
Shizu Saldamando
Roxanne Steinberg
Holly J. Tempo
Mia Doi Todd
Jeffrey Vallance
Lis Diane Wedgeworth

2019 COLA Artists

Juan Capistrán
Enrique Castrejon
Kim Fisher
Katie Grinnan
Sabrina Gschwandtner
Alice Könitz
Olga Koumoundouros
Suzanne Lummis
Aleida Rodríguez
Sandy Rodriguez
Stephanie Taylor
Dwight Trible
Peter Wu
Jenny Yurshansky

2024 COLA Panelists

Sharon Barnes
Shonda Buchanan
Jamie Costa
Raëlle Dorfan
Danny Jauregui
Rochele Gomez
Rafael González
Alex Sloane

2023 COLA Panelists

Neel Agrawal
Michael Datcher
Michele Jaffe
Camille Jenkins
Anna Katz
Marvella Muro
Umar Rashid
Holly J. Tempo

2022 COLA Panelists

Taylor Renee Aldridge
Amanda Fletcher
Ana Iwataki
Alec Mapa
Vincent Ramos
Aandrea Stang
Mia Doi Todd
Lisa Diane Wedgeworth

2021 COLA Panelists

Betty Avila
Leanna Bremond
Cassandra Coblentz
Sabrina Gschwandtner
Suzanne Lummis
Diana Nawi
Kamran V

2020 COLA Panelists

Sandra de la Loza
Daniela Lieja
Edgar Miramontes
Kelsey Nolan
Doris Sung
Kristina Wong
Steven Wong

2019 COLA Panelists

Bryan Barcena
Meryl Friedman
Joel Garcia
Mar Hollingsworth
Ciara Moloney
Jesus A. Reyes
Andreen Soley
Whitney Weston

2025 COLA IMAP Acknowledgements

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