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Painting by Livien Yin

PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT: *Dewdrops in the Garden*

September 10–October 8, 2022

Curated by Aay Preston-Myint

Artists: Ash Arder, Mark McKnight, Daniel Arthur Mendoza, Manal Kara,
Crystal Cortez, and Livien Yin

Opening Reception: September 10, 5:00–7:00 PM

San Francisco, CA, August 14, 2022—Southern Exposure is thrilled to present *Dewdrops in the Garden*, curated by Aay Preston-Myint, a member of SoEx's Curatorial Council. *Dewdrops in the Garden* explores ways in which marginalized people perform and embody joy, kinship, and eroticism in a space

called "nature." Through subject matter ranging from foraging to fetish culture, the artists in *Dewdrops* offer playful ecological perspectives that defy narratives of victimization and despair in the wake of colonialism and environmental apartheid. *Dewdrops in the Garden* captures an optimistic, yet fraught pastoral consciousness, in which black, brown, and queer bodies claim access to the outdoors and the pleasures unlocked there.

"So much about environmental stewardship, land sovereignty, and climate change feels insurmountable—anyone with any kind of environmental conscience is constantly wading through a disheartening fog of disinformation, only to feel almost powerless in the face of accelerationist change and the enormous, unseen chains of influence that global capitalism imposes," said curator Aay Preston-Myint. "We need narratives that can remind us that all is not lost, and that we have the tools and resources to connect with our sensuality and with the natural world at any time. The fact that some of the acts depicted in these works might be considered taboo, illegal, or just plain eccentric, I think reflects just how much power and confidence can be harnessed by exploring this relationship to nature on our own terms."

Curator Aay Preston-Myint is an artist and art worker living on Ohlone land in the San Francisco Bay Area. Their practice employs both visual and collaborative strategies to investigate memory and kinship, often within the specific context of queer community and history. In addition to their studio work, Aay is a founder of No Coast, an artist partnership that prints and distributes affordable contemporary artwork, is a co-director of the Chicago Art Book Fair, and has served as a DJ and organizer for Chances Dances, a party supporting and showcasing the work of queer artists in Chicago. They are currently the Program Manager at Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito, California, and support Bay Area artist communities through membership in the collective studio Real Time and Space in Oakland, Southern Exposure's Curatorial Council, and the Board of Directors at Small Press Traffic, a literary organization in San Francisco. The name "Aay" is pronounced like the letter "A."

Artists

Mark McKnight's work has been exhibited at Kendall Koppe, Glasgow; Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, New York; Paul Soto, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tucson; The Mistake Room, Los Angeles; Aperture Foundation, New York City; and the California Museum of Photography, Riverside. His works are in the public collections of Los Angeles County Museum of Art; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; and The Henry Art Gallery (Seattle). McKnight's first monograph, *Heaven Is a Prison*, was published by Loose Joints in September 2020, with support from the Light Work Photobook Award. He currently lives and works in New York, NY.

Daniel Arthur Mendoza's work is made from cut and sewn secondhand fabrics and drawings that celebrate queer history, joy, and friendship and its historical veiled-ness within the confines of daily life. Exploring themes of intimacy, repression, and refusal, Mendoza's work reveals a longing to rediscover the past, confront the weight of patriarchal visual propaganda, and open oneself to potential, soft,

hopeful futures. Mendoza's work has been exhibited at Human Resources Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA), Rivalry Projects (Buffalo, NY), New Wight Gallery (Los Angeles, CA), Swim Gallery (San Francisco, CA), Guerrero Gallery (San Francisco, CA), and Incline Gallery (San Francisco, CA). He received an MFA at UC Riverside in 2022, received a BA in Studio Art at UC Davis in 2013, and attended the Chautauqua Institution Schools of the Fine and Performing Arts in Chautauqua, New York. He is based in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay Areas.

Ash Arder is a transdisciplinary artist whose research-based approach works to expose, deconstruct, or reconfigure physical and conceptual systems—especially those related to ecology and/or industry. Arder manipulates physical and virtual environments to explore mark making, mechanical portraiture, and sound design as tools for complicating dynamics of power between humans, machines, and the lands they occupy. They were the recipient of a 2021 Knight Foundation Challenge Award and have exhibited work at the Kitchen (New York); the Museum of Contemporary Art (Detroit); Cranbrook Museum of Art (Bloomfield Hills, MI); and Pelican Bomb (New Orleans).

Manal Kara is a Moroccan-American self-taught artist working across sculpture, installation, video, and text. Recent solo exhibitions include *Conjectures*, Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles; *Xylem & Phloem*, No Place, Columbus; *The Viewing-Room vs. The Adoring-Gaze*, Interstate Projects, Brooklyn; and *Song of the Other Worm*, Prairie, Chicago. They have attended residencies at ACRE, Ox-Bow, September Spring at the Kesey Farm, Project Freewill, and Shandaken: Storm King. Upcoming projects include solo exhibitions at Hair + Nails (Minneapolis) and Projet Pangée (Montréal).

Livien Yin is an artist currently living and working in Milwaukee, WI. Recent exhibitions include solo shows at Friends Indeed Gallery and The New Gallery (Calgary) and group exhibitions at Jeffrey Deitch Gallery, Ben Brown Fine Arts (Hong Kong), and Berkeley Art Center. She is a recipient of the Murphy & Cadogan Contemporary Art Award and a residency at Headlands Center for the Arts. She received her MFA in Art Practice at Stanford University and her BA in Studio Art at Reed College.

Crystal Cortez is a sound and installation artist and programmer based in Portland, Oregon. Their work focuses on the empowerment of underserved populations to gain access and knowledge around technology. In 2019 they co-founded whateverSpace, a maker space offering free and sliding-scale workshops and technology rentals with priority given to the BIPOC community. Under their performance moniker Crystal Quartez, they transform field recordings and use synthesis, audio programming, data sonification, and 3D sound spatialization to produce complex sonic realms. Their practice has recently involved the development of interactive sculptural interfaces and wearable technology that monitor movement and other corporeal methods to liberate the performer from their interfaces. Their art has been shown at New Interfaces for Musical Expression (NIME), La MaMa (New York), Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA), Disjecta, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA), NAVEL (LA), and On the Boards (Seattle).

PROJECT + EVENT INFORMATION

What: *Dewdrops in the Garden*

When: September 10–October 8, 2022
Location: Southern Exposure
3030 20th Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

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When: September 10, 2022, 5:00–7:00 PM
Location: Southern Exposure
3030 20th Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

What: Performance, Reading, and Publication Release
Featuring: Crystal Quarte, other guests TBA
When: October 7, 2022, 6:00–8:00 PM
Location: Southern Exposure
3030 20th Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Southern Exposure respectfully acknowledges that we reside upon the ancestral, unceded, occupied lands of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. As an organization that has been based in the Mission district of San Francisco since 1974, we honor and recognize the Native people who have stewarded this land for thousands upon thousands of years and who continue to do so. We further acknowledge that we, as an organization, have benefited from the use and occupation of this stolen land. Given the ongoing, damaging injustices of colonization, Southern Exposure is committed to supporting our Bay Area community of diverse artists and Indigenous-led partnerships that extend Indigenous self-determination in San Francisco. We aspire to be good stewards of arts, culture, and generative conversations while always mindful of greater equity and justice.

This living statement represents an ongoing dialogue with the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone.

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ABOUT SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Southern Exposure (SoEx) is an artist-centered nonprofit organization committed to supporting visual artists. Through our extensive and innovative programming, SoEx strives to experiment, collaborate, and further educate while providing an extraordinary resource center and forum for Bay Area and national artists in our Mission District space and off site, in the public realm.

An active presence in the Bay Area since 1974, SoEx is continually evolving in response to the needs of artists and the community while engaging the public in artists' work. Central to our mission is to remain the most accessible space for visual artists to produce and present new work, learn, and connect. SoEx provides visual artists with the tools and resources they need to experiment in an open and supportive environment. We also work to advocate to new, diverse audiences and build an ever-growing community of enthusiasts and supporters of the visual arts.

For more information and images, contact Emma Rosenbaum at (415) 863-2141 x102 or emma@soex.org. Southern Exposure is located at 3030 20th Street (at Alabama), San Francisco, CA 94110. Office hours are Monday to Friday, 10:00AM to 6:00PM.

Website: <https://soex.org/>

Instagram: @southernexposuresf

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