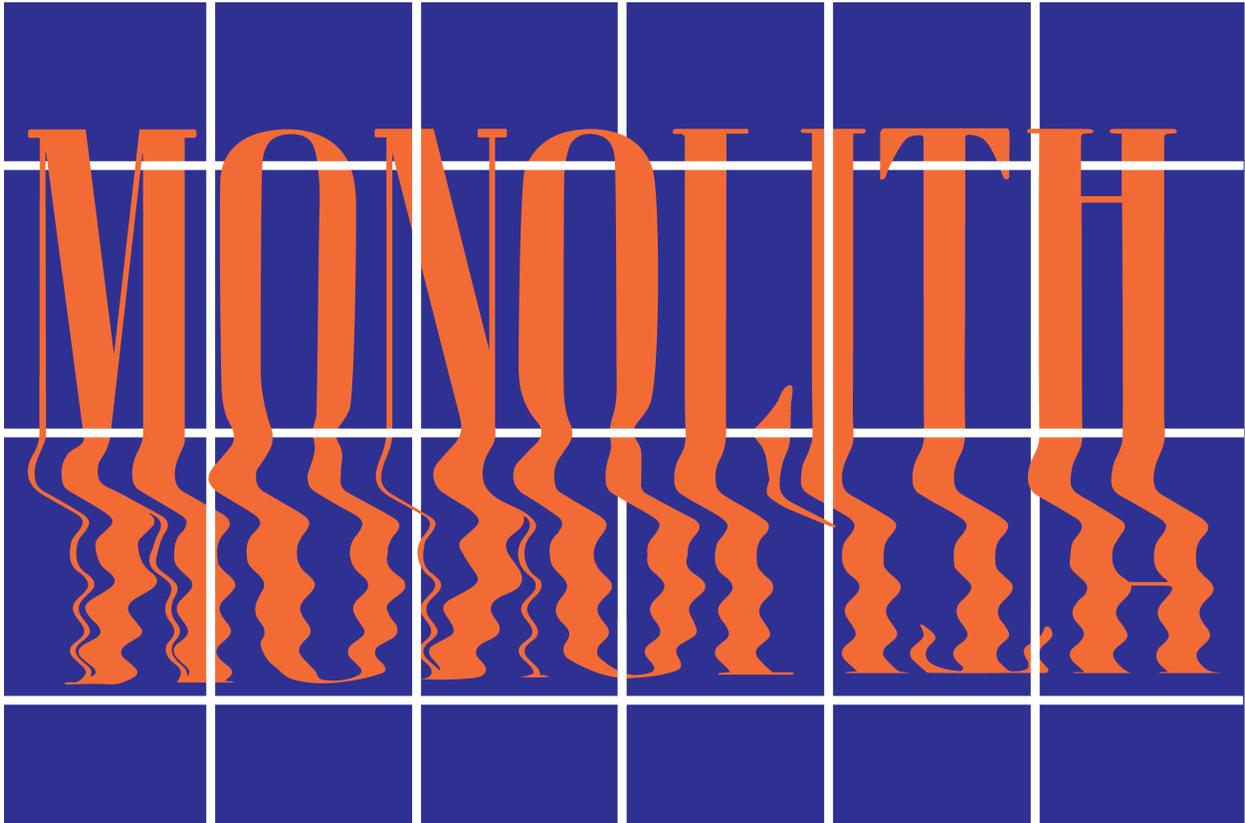


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Monolith logo design by Stevie Sokolouski

Project Announcement: *MONOLITH*

September 18 - October 16, 2021

Curated by Ricki Dwyer

Artists: Charmaine Bee, Edgar Fabián Frías, Leena Joshi, Liz Roberts, Jess Robbins

August 20, 2021, San Francisco, CA – Southern Exposure is proud to present *MONOLITH*, a group exhibition curated by SoEx Curatorial Councilmember and artist Ricki Dwyer. The five artists in this show work across a spectrum of genres while accessing the autobiographical as raw matter. Working within a world which flattens and exploits personal narrative, these artists individually acknowledge the complexities of their lived experience, invest rich material practices in self-determination, and collectively construct a moment of bold relief.

Liz Roberts presents a short documentary on the lived experience of opioid addiction which combats the redemption narrative of sobriety. Leena Joshi's vinyl sign is installed as an aggressive act of poetic reclamation of their own desirability. Jess Robbins exhibits the emotional navigation of searching for parental support through their sculptural installation of makeshift shoes titled *Stand-Ins* and accompanying performance *Are You My Mother?*. Charmaine Bee's textile and medicinal herb installation sits within their *Portal Series* and the ongoing practice of connecting spiritually to ancestral lineage. Edgar Fabián Frías has installed a billboard project which, when previously exhibited, had been vandalized as a hate crime. Within the context of this show Frías will ritualize the healing and release of this violence through a performance ceremony.

The opening reception on September 18, 2021 will include joint durational performances from Edgar Fabián Frías and Jess Robbins. Frías will ceremonially create a container for self-healing around their work. Following the hate crime vandalization of their billboard installation depicting them amongst their ancestors, the violated remains of that project have been installed in SoEx's gallery. During this ceremonial performance, titled *Ancestral Offering*, Frías will disarm the intended violence and reclaim their honor and beauty within an indigenous ancestry.

Simultaneously, Jess Robbins will be enacting her own ritual of making precarious shoes, or *Stand-Ins*, the object ephemera of her conceptual pursuit of a 'Mother'. Departing from her craftsmanship as a fine leatherworker, these transient sculptural works decontextualize the value of trash as much as they reframe our consideration of footwear. In performing the act of constructing shoes to fit a doppelgänger-model's feet, the question of who is standing-in presents us with the possibility that the feet were found to fit the shoe. With an uncertainty as to which molds and which forms, this performance titled *Are You My Mother?* cheekily ritualizes the construction of a mother mold.

On September 30, Kochina Rude will moderate a panel discussion on harm reduction. In dialogue with Liz Robert's documentary *Midwaste*, this conversation will address the ongoing opioid crisis, what it means to be making work around this issue, and the challenges of presenting a critique of the sobriety redemption narrative.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog designed by Stevie Sokolouski which includes an essay by Vanessa Thill and additional work by the show's artists.

PROJECT + EVENT INFORMATION

What: *MONOLITH*
Curated by Ricki Dwyer, *MONOLITH* is a group exhibition and a multi-layered project featuring work by Charmaine Bee, Edgar Fabián Frías, Leena Joshi, Liz Roberts, Jess Robbins.

When: September 18 – October 16, 2021
Tuesday – Saturday, 12:00PM – 6:00PM

Location: Southern Exposure, 3030 20th Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

What: *MONOLITH* Opening Reception

When: Saturday, September 18, 2021, 3:00 – 7:00PM

Location: Southern Exposure, 3030 20th Street, San Francisco, CA 94110
Limited capacity, monitored at door

What: *Ancestral Offering + Are you my mother?*
Exhibition activation performances by Edgar Fabián Frías and Jess Robbins. Frías and Robbins perform simultaneous ritual acts of healing and longing alongside their installations. These artists engage their own roles within their family lines and ceremonialize the temporal act of belonging.

When: Saturday, September 18, 2021, 7:00 PM – 8:00PM
Limited capacity; RSVP at calendly.com

Location: Southern Exposure, 3030 20th Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

What: Harm Reduction panel moderated by Kochina Rude
In dialogue with Liz Robert's documentary *Midwaste*, this panel seeks to address the current opioid crisis, what it means to be making work around this issue, and the challenges of presenting a critique of the sobriety redemption narrative.

When: Thursday, September 30, 2021, 7:00 PM – 8:00PM
Limited capacity; RSVP at calendly.com

Location: Southern Exposure, 3030 20th Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Ricki Dwyer is an artist raised and residing in the San Francisco Bay Area. His work draws from the cosmological mythologies of weaving, the industrial legacy of textiles as an economy, and his own path of queer identity construction. He honors drapery as the negotiation that things will never fall the same way twice. He received his BFA from the Savannah College of Art and Design and his MFA from UC Berkeley. He has shown with Slash, Anglim Gilbert, Eleanor Harwood, Guerrero Gallery, and the Berkeley Art Museum. He has been in residence with Recology, Jupiter Woods Gallery London, and The Textile Arts Center New York. He has been recipient of the Eisner Prize, Murphy and Cadogan Award, and the Queer Cultural Center's Emerging Scholar Award.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Charmaine Bee uses mediums such as video, movement, sculpture, writing, sound and textile and makes work about Gullah heritage and the histories and manifestations of African diaspora spirituality. Charmaine works with materials harvested in the Sea Islands of the United States during the era of slavery, such as rice and indigo. Charmaine also makes work about medical bias as well as healing and wellness through plant medicine and how these histories are activated through portals of geographic sites, time and spaces we can't see but can feel. Before receiving an MFA, Charmaine formally studied herbalism and makes herbal medicine and teaches workshops on herbs for dreaming. Charmaine is from the Sea Islands of South Carolina and resides in Bahia, Brazil.

Edgar Fabián Frías is a nonbinary, queer, indigenous (Wixárika), and Latinx, multidisciplinary artist, curator, educator, and psychotherapist. They work in photography, video art, sound, sculpture, printed textiles, GIFs, performance, social practice, and community organizing, among other forms. Born in East Los Angeles in 1983, Frías received dual BA degrees in Psychology and Studio Art from the UC, Riverside. In 2013, they received an MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon, with an emphasis on Interpersonal Neurobiology and Somatic Psychotherapy. Frías is currently a 2022 candidate for an MFA in Art Practice at UC Berkeley.

Leena Joshi is an artist, poet, and educator. Their current projects consider methods of resistance to the pressure of mastery of personhood for minoritarian people, instead leaning into the notion of the insufficient subject, slippage, and escape from neoliberal subjectivity, racial capitalism, and state control. Their visual work has been featured at the Berkeley Art Museum; Montalvo Arts Center (Bay Area), SOIL Gallery (Seattle), Detroit Art Week, and Institute of Contemporary Arts (London), among others. Leena's written works can be found in SFMoMA's Open Space, the Berkeley Poetry Review, the Felt, Monday: the Jacob Lawrence Gallery Journal, TAGVVERK, La Norda Speciale, Poor Claudia, and bluestockings magazine, among others. They hold an MFA from the University of California, Berkeley's department of Art Practice and a BA in Creative Writing from the University of Washington.

Liz Roberts makes work that is often collaborative and rooted in moving image and sound. For the last several years she's considered how first person filmmaking can possibly reckon with the violence of an extractive camera. Roberts has held teaching positions in cinema and art departments at Denison University, Columbus College of Art & Design, and Ohio State University. While living in Ohio she worked collectively and horizontally with a large group of artists called MINT in their warehouse space, concurrent with teaching at institutions of higher education.

Jess Robbins is a queer interdisciplinary artist currently working in Tulsa, OK. Through sculpture, collage and performance, Robbins' art practice investigates modes of training, containing and displaying the body, questioning how language and material are used to censor its leaks. Robbins holds a BFA from The Cooper Union and an MFA from The University of California Berkeley. She is the Founder and Master Leather Craftsman at Haptic, a leather design studio where she works and teaches. Her work has been shown at BAMPFA, Oros Gallery (SF), LaMama Galleria (NYC), Artist Alliance (NYC), and internationally at Ginerva Gambino (Cologne), Kuir Bogota-Festival Internacional de Arte & Cine Queer (Bogota), and The Royal Hibernian Academy (Dublin).

Vanessa Thill is an artist and writer based in Brooklyn, New York. Her solo shows in New York have taken place at Deli Gallery, Larrie NYC, Bible, and Hood Gallery, and she has participated in exhibitions in the US and Europe, including at JTT (New York), Hessel Museum of Art (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY), Camayuhs (Atlanta, GA), No Place Gallery (Columbus, OH), Golestani (Düsseldorf, Germany) and Alte Fabrik (Rapperswil, Switzerland). She contributes critical writing to publications including *Bomb*, *Cultured*, and *Artforum*. *Balsam*, Thill's book of poetry, was published by Pacific Press in 2020. She is engaged with community organizing with Art Against Displacement, a group of artists and arts workers who fight against displacement in NYC, advocating for popular power and community control over land use and housing.

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ABOUT SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Southern Exposure (SoEx) is an artist-centered non-profit 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.

S O U T H E R N
E X P O S U R E

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For more information and images, contact Stevie Sokolouski at (415) 863-2141 x102 or stephen@soex.org. Southern Exposure is located at 3030 20th Street (at Alabama), San Francisco, CA 94110. Office hours are Wednesday through Friday, 12:00PM to 5:00PM. *Please note that our office hours are limited and our main gallery capacity is limited in accordance with San Francisco's health and safety guidelines. Masks required for entry.*

Website: soex.org.

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