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Design by Helen Shewolfe Tseng

EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENT: *Moving Clouds* | Group
Exhibition Curated by Cathy Lu

January 27 - March 9, 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 27, 2024, 5 - 7 PM

ARTISTS:

Saif Azzuz

Cliff Hengst

Heesoo Kwon
Melissa Lewis (Deuce Lee)
Umico Niwa
yétúndé olagbaju
Tracy Ren
Jezabeth Roca González
Rochelle Youk
Jes Young

San Francisco, CA, January 2024—Southern Exposure is thrilled to present *Moving Clouds*, a group exhibition curated by Curatorial Councilmember Cathy Lu.

This exhibition is a gathering of necromancers, ancestor callers, and those unafraid to call upon that which was proclaimed dead and over, but in fact has been fully alive and permeating every aspect of our worlds and beings. This exhibition features installation, video, sculpture, painting, and textile works. Many of these artists draw attention to histories and cultures that have often been silenced or pushed into the margins, despite their continued impact. They engage with the past in order to understand our present and co-build our futures. Through these artists, the dead are alive. Other artists' works are reminders of how many BIPOC and LGBTQ+ and diasporic communities exist precariously in a state close to death because of a denial of access to medical care, state brutality, etc. In the process, the haunting proximity of death is turned into an opportunity for humanization and empowerment.

"We are so excited to launch Southern Exposure's 50th year with this beautiful exhibition that calls in the past and seeds the future conversation with these dynamic voices." - Valerie Imus, Artistic and Co-Director

"*Moving Clouds* features artists whose work actively creates portals between past and present, life and death. I'm thrilled that SoEx can provide the opportunity to work with these amazing artists!" - Cathy Lu, curator and Curatorial Councilmember

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Cathy Lu's work manipulates traditional Chinese art objects and symbols as a way to deconstruct the assumptions we have about Asian American identity and cultural authenticity. By creating ceramic based sculptures and large scale installations, Lu explores what it means to be both Asian and American, while not being entirely accepted as either. Unpacking how experiences of immigration, cultural hybridity, and cultural assimilation become part of the larger American identity is central to her work.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SAIF AZZUZ (b. 1987) is a Libyan-Yurok artist who resides in Pacifica, CA. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Painting and Drawing from the California College of the Arts in 2013. Azzuz has exhibited widely in the Bay Area, including a forthcoming solo exhibition at SF ICA in 2024 and exhibitions at

1599dt Gallery, San Francisco, CA; Adobe Books, San Francisco, CA; Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA; Galerie Julien Cadet, Paris, FR; Pt.2 Gallery, Oakland, CA; Ever Gold [Projects], San Francisco, CA; NIAD, Oakland, CA; Rule Gallery, Denver, CO; Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York, NY; Jack Barrett, New York, NY and K Art, Buffalo, NY. Azzuz is a 2022 SFMOMA SECA Award finalist and has participated in the Clarion Alley Mural Project and the Facebook Artist in Residence program.

CLIFF HENGST is an artist and performer who works and lives in San Francisco. He has exhibited work at SFMOMA, Southern Exposure, The San Francisco Arts Commission and Gallery 16 in San Francisco. Hengst has performed and exhibited at Hauser & Wirth, L.A Machine Project in Los Angeles, The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College in Saratoga, New York, the Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive, and at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia.

HEESOO KWON (b. 1990, Seoul, South Korea) is a multidisciplinary artist based in San Francisco. Positioning herself as an artist, activist, archivist, anthropologist, and religious figure, Kwon builds feminist utopias in the digital realm that liberate one from personal, familial, and historical trauma rooted in patriarchy. Central to her practice and substantial bodies of work is Leymusoom, an autobiographical feminist religion she initiated in 2017 as a form of personal resistance against misogyny and an ever-evolving framework for investigating her family histories. Kwon utilizes technologies such as digital archiving, 3D scanning, and animation as her ritualistic and shamanistic tools to regenerate her woman ancestors' lives without constraints of time and space, and to queer her past, present, and utopian dreams.

MELISSA LEWIS WONG (DEUCE LEE) (they/she/他) is a queer, mixed-race Chinese American nonbinary dance and drag artist. Their maternal Chinese lineage is the place from which they create—in conversation with queerness, mixedness, and diaspora. Their physical training comes from a background of traditional Chinese folk arts, Western modern dance, and martial arts (Jeet Kune Do, Tai Chi). Deuce Lee is their drag persona, a drag king/thing taking inspiration from traditional Chinese opera aesthetic/face, Bruce Lee's media and martial arts legacy, and the drag ancestry of Black & Brown queers. Deuce explores themes of Asian American identity by flipping cultural stereotypes and tropes, painting hyperboles of gender, and challenging drag norms.

UMICO NIWA (b. 1991, Japan) received her MFA in Sculpture + Extended Media from the Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, in 2020. Rejecting Western notions of personhood, Niwa considers alternative modes of existence unbridled by bodily-restrictions or gender constructs. Her creations speak to a state of being defined by perpetual movement - a flower, wilting; a fruit ripening. A seed vault, a genetic sequence, a sensorium, a somatic memory bank. A valley full of weeds, bursting with life.

YÉTUNDÉ OLAGBAJU (b. 1990) is a research-based artist, organizer, and residency director living on Ohlone and Tongva lands (Bay Area & Los Angeles, CA). Their work roots from a single question: What must we reckon with as we build a future, together? With no set answers or expectations, olagbaju unravels intricate connections as a means of highlighting our interdependence. They are interested in how our familial, platonic, romantic, and ecological bonds are affected by what we confront in the reckoning. Inspired by the divine and the everyday within Blackness, they use the moving-image, the sculptural, and the collaborative in order to explore possible futures. Through their social practice they

have co-founded and are a member of numerous artist and worker-led collectives, each with liberatory missions and values. An advocate for non-hierarchical working structures, they embrace shared leadership models that challenge white supremacy, by actively rejecting disposability and power hoarding — two of its guiding tenets. They hold an MFA from Mills College and are the recipient of multiple awards including a YBCA 100 award and a Headlands Center for the Arts fellowship. They were a recent award finalist with ART X Prize, organized by ART X Lagos and was a resident at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts [Deer Isle, ME] and Center for Afrofuturist Studies [Iowa City, IA]. They began a commission and 5 month residency at 500 Capp Street in winter 2023.

TRACY REN (b. 1991 in St. Louis, MO) is a multidisciplinary artist who lives and works in San Francisco, CA. They graduated from California College of the Arts with a BFA in Ceramics in 2018, and have since shown in galleries across the SF Bay Area, in NYC and in Los Angeles including but not limited to Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Pt. 2 Gallery, Jessica Silverman Gallery, Wing On Wo & Co, Tiger Strikes Asteroid LA, and the Berkeley Art Center. Central to their work is a deep interest in the poetics of materials, and the ways in which we are held by one another both within and across space and time. Through the lens of craft, a process of pulling things apart and putting them back together, they make sculptures and installations with the intention to deepen their understanding of their ancestral culture, family history, spirituality at large, and the everyday.

JEZABETH ROCA GONZÁLEZ is a multidisciplinary maker and educator working in collaboration with their family. Their multimedia installations make use of video, soil, and plants to explore the intimacy of place and the ever-shifting, migratory movement of people between the U.S. and Puerto Rico—known colloquially as El Va y Ven. Jezabeth implements autobiographical methods to explore the banality of everyday life. They are invested in generating visual records of their own family dynamics, which include themes of generational difference, altered landscape, and the cultures and aesthetics of care. Combining and contrasting the autobiographical with the speculative, Jezabeth constructs video vignettes and builds multiple, parallel realms that question the manner in which colonial legacies shape the land and the duality inherent in everyday life.

ROCHELLE YOUK works across media to craft objects informed by her heritage as the American daughter of immigrants from Japan and Korea. Labor-intensive paintings, drawings, and sculptures examine the history between Asia and the United States through the lens of cultural traditions, especially folk crafts. She uses non-traditional materials, like plexiglass and cigarettes, to examine how visual traditions are shared, exchanged, and used to form identity. Her work has been shown widely across the San Francisco Bay Area including at the Berkeley Art Center, where she is also a member of the Program Committee. After receiving an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2010, Youk completed a bookbinding apprenticeship at letterpress publisher, Arion Press, where she currently manages the bindery. She also works as a freelance bookbinder for local artists and publishers, and serves on the steering committee of the Korean American Artist Collective.

JES YOUNG is a multidisciplinary artist, maker, story-teller, educator, and curator from the SF Bay Area and based in Oakland, CA. Their practice in material storytelling comes from Chinese and “Western” craft based healing / processing rituals that include patchwork quilting, natural dying, photography, ceramics, and familial / communal / herbal research. Jes is continuing a practice of material storytelling from many generations before them, and from these roots they intend to (re)write and (re)contextualize

stories that center / honor complex truths. They are interested in storytelling through the ephemerality / changeability of generational memory. Modes of story sharing like speaking and craft making are always transforming as time passes and environments shift. Combining personal, fictional, and passed down stories from a biographical / memoir lens emphasizes the malleability of memory and allows Jes to (re)construct stories for those of us with multiple intersections. Jes received a BFA from California College of the Arts. They have presented work in solo shows at Dream Farm Commons (Oakland, CA) and Cone Shape Top (Oakland, CA) and in group exhibitions at Kearny Street Workshop (San Francisco, CA), CTRL+SHFT Collective (Oakland, CA), and Root Division (San Francisco, CA). Jes has also curated exhibitions and organized events at Dream Farm Commons (Oakland, CA) and CTRL+SHFT Collective and has worked on the curatorial and AiR committee at Dream Farm Commons.

PROJECT + EVENT INFORMATION

What: [Opening Reception](#)
Where: Southern Exposure, 3030 20th Street, San Francisco
When: Saturday, January 27, 2024
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Cost: Free

Title: [Deuce Lee](#)
What: Performance
Where: Southern Exposure, 3030 20th Street, San Francisco
When: Saturday, February 24, 2024
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Cost: Free

Download images [here](#). Visit the exhibition site [here](#).

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.

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](https://www.instagram.com/southernexposuresf)

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