

CABINET of GHOSTS



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–Regine Angela Thompson

The exhibition “Cabinet of Ghosts” evolved from a series of photographs that Michael EB Detto took for his book *Cambodian Ghosts*. Detto’s images depict the uprooted Khmer people, some of whom are survivors of the infamous killing fields of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, who are now living in Long Beach, California. Through his photographs and an in-depth study of ghosts, Detto uncovers what it means for people to bring their experiences from a far-away homeland to their new country. He documents how they live and work in this new place, where they had to learn a new language, adjust to a new culture, and where their children were born. Many of the Cambodian refugees and their descendents are dressed in their beautiful traditional gowns, eating their traditional food while celebrating their traditional festivals. These colorful and richly decorated costumes as well as the women’s intricate hairdos and ornate jewelry remind us that these people came from afar. The images draw us in and invite us to listen to their music, to taste their food and to discover more about them and their history.

As we look more closely at the photographs, superimposed faint, ghost-like images of Cambodian people appear in the most unlikely places, seemingly coming straight from their former lives. They are the Cambodian Ghosts, as Detto calls them, who help us, the viewers, connect the refugees with their country of origin as well as to their new lives in Long Beach. It is his way of bringing them to us, and thus we begin to understand that our own past, too, will always be part of our lives and who we are today. In this way, such ghost-like memories of our earlier lives may haunt us and at the same time help us adjust to our daily lives; they console us and make us feel at home in our new environment, even if we say we do not believe in ghosts. As we contemplate the images we realize that no matter where we go or escape to on this planet, what happened to us long ago will forever remain an integral part of who we are.

Could it be then that in a very real sense we are never alone as long as we stay in touch with our past, even if we are far away from our homeland? Detto’s pictures seem to indicate this possibility, which becomes reality as we look intensely at his photographs. His primary goal is to make us aware of how vitally important it is for our well being to remember what happened at an earlier time in our lives.

By contemplating these photographs, we become aware of the fact that remembering our past gives us stability in the presence. This stability allows us to free ourselves from past horrors so we can live today fully and completely. As we realize our potential in a new world, we can embark on a promising future, in which the sounds of a fire engine will no longer remind bombing victims of an air raid siren, making them feel the urge to run for their lives, and where any sudden loud noise will no longer instill fear of mortal danger in them, nor will piercing screams instantly remind them of former pain and suffering.

For Detto, the work with Cambodian refugees and their memories of their homeland began with a song by the group Dengue Fever that he heard on KCRW. He was completely taken in by this seductive music that inspired him to find out more about the group. The particularly characteristic way in which the band dealt with their own past through music fascinated him and pulled him into the Cambodian adventure. As Michael and I sat together and I listened to his stories about the people of the Cambodian community in Long Beach, I was reminded of my own past.

I was born in Dresden, Germany. This city, also called the Florence on the Elbe River, was known throughout the world for its beauty and splendor. Until I was ten, we lived under Soviet occupation in the GDR with its daily hardships and fears that were part of life in a communist country. I was surrounded by the ruins of the completely destroyed city. During one night and the following day Dresden had suffered four of the worst, most catastrophic and deadly fire bombing attacks of WW II, culminating in the legendary fire storms that sucked the oxygen out of the narrow streets of Dresden's Old Town and the cellars of the houses where people had sought refuge, only to suffocate and burn to death. The disastrous consequences of the bombing of Dresden, the loss of all our possessions and many family members, would always remain part of my life.

Fortunately my family and I were able to escape Communism in the early 1950s and settle on the Rhine River. Eventually I came to live in California, but a deep inner connection to my homeland remained. Year after year I felt compelled to return to Germany, and eventually I dared to cross the Iron Curtain to revisit

Dresden, my home town. The memories of my earliest childhood possessed me as I lacked the most basic tools with which to overcome my past. There was no one to talk to about it, no one wanted to hear my story, so I had to keep it all inside, but the effects of catastrophes like these don't just go away. We get traumatized by them, unable to cast off the dark shadows of the past. It takes time to develop strategies to deal with such disastrous events and to understand how dust can become a material for creating art.

I have lived with the aftermath of air raids for as long as I can remember, and even today I am reminded of the bombings, as I see and hear about death and destruction on the news daily. While life goes on for those who survived such attacks, our experiences remain a fundamental part of who we are, even if we are not aware of it. Today I understand that we can neither escape those memories, nor should we willfully try to forget them, or hope to leave them behind somehow, because if we did, we would become disconnected from our beginnings and violate our own being. Instead, we can and must learn to live with our past. That is why this year for the first time I flew to Europe to be in Dresden for the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the area bombings on February 13th and 14th 1945. I finally realized that I had to return to Dresden once in my life on that fateful date. The pull of my memories and the need to face the place of my family's personal defeat had become so strong that I could no longer resist it if I did not want to miss out on a necessary and long overdue reconciliation of my past with the present. Under a pale blue sky and a bright winter sun, with snow glistening on the cobble stone pavements and the roof tops of the houses of Dresden's Old Town, I listened to the bells of the restored Frauenkirche ring out their message of peace and freedom to the thousands of people who had come from all over the world to remember the great fire and destruction. As I walked through the streets of rebuilt houses, emanating a new confidence that spoke of hope and rebirth, I suddenly understood that without facing such painful events point blank, there would be no future because we would remain stuck in history and self pity.

We know today that our experiences accompany us for the rest of our lives. They are always present, they are like ghosts that haunt us, they affect everything we do, all the decisions we make, and we pass them on to our children, who then,

unwittingly, carry their parents' physical suffering and psychological burdens. It is as if we inherited our parents' trauma through our genes; it has been called "Child-of Survivor Syndrome".

I also believe that it must always be a legitimate question to ask, who is a victim, who has the right to call himself or herself a victim? And don't we always have victims on all sides? Were we not all traumatized by the horrors of war, no matter what side we were on? I had never seen myself and my family on the same level as the victims who were murdered in concentration camps, who were brutally killed by German soldiers and soldiers of other countries, or people who were left to freeze and starve to death by the millions throughout Eastern Europe, Russia and China, but I know that the two women, my mother and my beloved grandmother, were victims in a twofold way—they were victims of the Nazis and they were victims of the allied area bombings of German cities.

Michael Detto and Sayon Syprasoeuth came together again for the exhibition of "Cabinet of Ghosts". When he was six years old, Sayon and his family escaped Cambodia and the violence of the Khmer Rouge. He, too, carries within him the memories of atrocities committed against his people, and he remembers the people that he once knew and who are now dead. For Michael, ghosts are a metaphor; for Sayon ghosts are real. And yet, both artists are haunted by their memories. Those ghosts or apparitions from the past stir up our innermost beings as we spend time looking at their artistic work. Through their art we become sensitive to the lives of others, and at the same time we become free to act responsibly and to react to injustices. Sensitized, we have to open our eyes wide and look straight at the problem, we cannot turn away any longer. We must ask questions and allow ourselves to become compelled to find ways to commemorate the victims in the hope that this simple act of understanding will help us live better lives today. And suddenly the darkness is lifted and we are shown a way that frees us from the verdict that after Auschwitz poems can no longer be written. Only as we continue to work and live and love can we overcome the horrors of our past. I believe that we must never stop writing poems, creating art and composing music, so that the former murderers will not become victorious over us a second time as we throw away our lives through a false understanding of piety by not bringing forth that which is within us. The act of writing a poem rescues us from oblivion and brings us back to life.

The exhibition "Cabinet of Ghosts" was curated by the artists. They were part of the exhibition every step of the way as they set it up personally, because they wanted to learn more about themselves and how they could and should use metaphors in their work. Visitors found images and memories of the artists' past in their work, images that were hidden so deeply within their psyche that the artists themselves were often unaware of them. And yet, almost miraculously, their work liberated them from the grips of their traumatic past as they made their experiences visible for us. Often unconsciously, the artists incorporated the memories of their origins, thus allowing them to come to life in their work for us, the observers. In this way remembrance of a dark past and the celebration of life join together in the works of artists.





In a virtual and literal clearing out of the cabinet of ghosts, performance artists Amy Kaps and the Brutal Blondes will sweep messages hidden throughout the space revealing secrets, memories and thoughts based on historical and personal events, and the writings of WG Sebald. The costumes expose the cyclical, and ultimately absurd connection between the now American feminist icon, Rosie the Riveter, and the German Trümmer Frauen (Women of the Ruins). Both mythical figures emerged during WWII out of necessity. The men were gone. So, Rosie built the bombs that were dropped on German soil, and the Trümmer Frauen supposedly picked up the debris left by the bombs. Bomb for bomb, brick for, brick, letter for letter. Examining the world of spirits and memory, images materialize through projected visuals and sound design, composed by lovemando, evocative of a psychedelic catharsis.



The works in the show are narratives that are based on personal and cultural reflection. Each piece utilizes historical tropes from famous figures in history, literature, each personify the ghost of memory. The characters are pulled from American culture of cartoons, comics and films. These figures are a juxtaposition of POP and Horror to create a new narrative.





The reception also featured a performance by Dengue Fever, framing the exhibition with a lush soundtrack of – resurrected and revitalized - Cambodian Pop.

In the aftermath a song was produced (added to this catalogue) based on a text by the German philosopher and essayist Walter Benjamin (1892 - 1940). That small piece had become a staple for discussions of his work related to the intersection of art, painting and history. It is paragraph IX of his “Theses on the Philosophy of History”, and it addresses a painting by Paul Klee (see next page).

We are very grateful that Suhrkamp Publishers allowed the “translation of the below mentioned text of Walter Benjamin into Khmer and the use in different formats, scoring, performance, print, digital timely unlimited”.

The translation was done by Pagnawath Khun, in consideration of the English version by Lloyd Spencer.





“Es gibt ein Bild von Klee, das Angelus Novus heißt. Ein Engel ist darauf dargestellt, der aussieht, als wäre er im Begriff, sich von etwas zu entfernen, worauf er starrt. Seine Augen sind aufgerissen, sein Mund steht offen und seine Flügel sind ausgespannt. Der Engel der Geschichte muß so aussehen. Er hat das Antlitz der Vergangenheit zugewendet. Wo eine Kette von Begebenheiten vor uns erscheint, da sieht er eine einzige Katastrophe, die unablässig Trümmer auf Trümmer häuft und sie ihm vor die Füße schleudert. Er möchte wohl verweilen, die Toten wecken und das Zerschlagene zusammenfügen. Aber ein Sturm weht vom Paradiese her, der sich in seinen Flügeln verfangen hat und so stark ist, daß der Engel sie nicht mehr schließen kann. Dieser Sturm treibt ihn unaufhaltsam in die Zukunft, der er den Rücken kehrt, während der Trümmerhaufen vor ihm zum Himmel wächst. Das, was wir den Fortschritt nennen, ist dieser Sturm.“

– Walter Benjamin: Über den Begriff der Geschichte (1940), These IX

“A Klee painting named ‘Angelus Novus’ shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.”

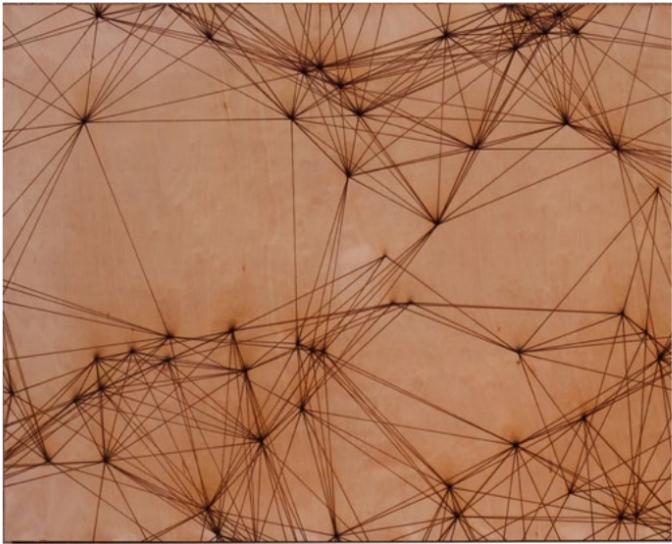
– Walter Benjamin: On the Concept of History /Theses on the Philosophy of History 9

**ទេវៈនៃប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រ
 គំនូសបែប គណេ មួយឈ្មោះថា វិសេសសេស ញ៉ាតុស៊ី
 បង្ហាញអំពីទេវៈមួយព្រះអង្គ
 ដោយមើលទៅហាក់ដូចជាព្រះអង្គទៀបនឹងប្លូតូក្លាស់ទីទៅឆ្ងាយពីអ្វីមួយ
 ដែលព្រះអង្គកំពុងពិចារណាដោយយកចិត្តទុកដាក់ ។
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 ធ្លាបរបស់ព្រះអង្គកំពុងត្រូវដាង។
 នេះគឺជាច្បាប់មួយដែលអ្នកគួរគំនូសបង្ហាញពីតួបភាពទេវៈនៃប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រ។
 ព្រះភ្នែករបស់ព្រះអង្គបែរទៅរកអតីតកាល។
 ដែលធ្វើអោយលើសពីនេះអាចម្យ៉ាងពីសម្ងាត់នានានៃព្រឹត្តិការណ៍ជាច្រើន
 ព្រះអង្គទ្រង់ទស្សនាការឃើញថាមានគ្រោះមហន្តរាយមួយ
 ដែលកំពុងពួកកំពុងកំពុងបំបែកបែកចត់ ហើយបែកចូលទៅចំមុខព្រះ
 រាងរបស់ព្រះអង្គ។
 ទេវៈព្រះអង្គចង់ស្ថិត បន្តនៅ ដាស់ចាប់អ្នកដែលទន់ទូលមរណៈអោយភ្ញាក់
 និងធ្វើការប្រមូលផ្តុំវិញទាំងស្រុងនូវអ្វីដែលត្រូវទុកបំបែកអោយបែកចត់ទ្រុឌទ្រី។
 ប៉ុន្តែមានព្យុះមួយកំពុងទេសបត់ចុះមកពីស្ថានសួគ៌។
 ព្យុះនោះទុកទេសបត់ចុះនឹងធ្លាបរបស់ព្រះអង្គដោយកំលាំងយ៉ាងខ្លាំងមហិមា
 ដែលធ្វើឱ្យទេវៈព្រះអង្គមិនអាចធ្លោបធ្លាបវិញទេស។
 ព្យុះនោះចុះច្រានព្រះអង្គទៅកាន់អនាគតមួយដែលមិនអាចប្រកែកទេស
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 ក្នុងរណៈពេលដែលគំនូរកំពុងកំពុងនៅពីមុខព្រះអង្គដុះឡើងឆ្ពោះទៅលើចក្រមេឃ។
 ព្យុះនេះគឺជាអ្វីដែលលើសហៅថា ការវិវឌ្ឍ។**

Ichiro Irie works across a wide range of genres and media. With his recent Refracture series, Irie extends the boundaries of his larger body of work called Accumulations where he uses small mass produced objects in very large quantities to create objects and images that reflect upon art history, popular culture and modernity. The Refracture series consist of broken sunglass lenses which are carefully reconfigured like a jigsaw puzzle to become black, reflective, and optically engaging wall pieces. They recall Malevich's black square paintings only if they were made of hundreds of bits of shattered curved glass. The broken lenses stand in for the idea of a fractured civilization and modernity as Irie attempts, probably in vain, to put the pieces back together.

Ichiro Irie and Lucas Kazansky have made a group of collaborative wall hanging works called "Blood, Sex, and Car Wrecks" that have an interactive, augmented reality component which is activated through the use of a downloadable application on mobile devices such as iPads and iPhones. These works juxtapose an array of visuals such as crashed cars, broken glass, and splattered blood, as well as imagery from popular culture, art history and pornography, in an attempt to draw a parallel between what Freud refers to as "death wish", and our basic erotic needs. In addition to this series, they will feature 2 brand new works using the same technology around the theme of the exhibition.





Odgers considers making art to be the activity closest to being his true self, and the act of painting his most productive form of meditation. His non-dogmatic work is intended only for his personal involvement, self-discovery, and self-questioning. It is meant to be transcended and proved useless once fully embraced—its own form of impermanence. The very process of understanding something brings about a transformational change making that which preceded it obsolete, and a new facet of awareness is achieved.



The images in the Erased Lynching series are derived from appropriated lynching postcards from across the United States. In each, the lynching victim and rope were digitally removed from the image. This conceptual gesture is intended to redirect the viewer's attention away from the lifeless body of the lynch victim and towards the social and photographic conditions of its making. These images allow the viewer to consider the mechanisms: of spectacle, the history of racial violence, the role of the photographer, and our growing understanding of systemic violence -- past and present.





From ghosts of the self to phantom limbs, from the tragic to the grotesque.

From ghost DNA to forgotten species, species that never were, that could have been.

From “monsters” to “wonders”

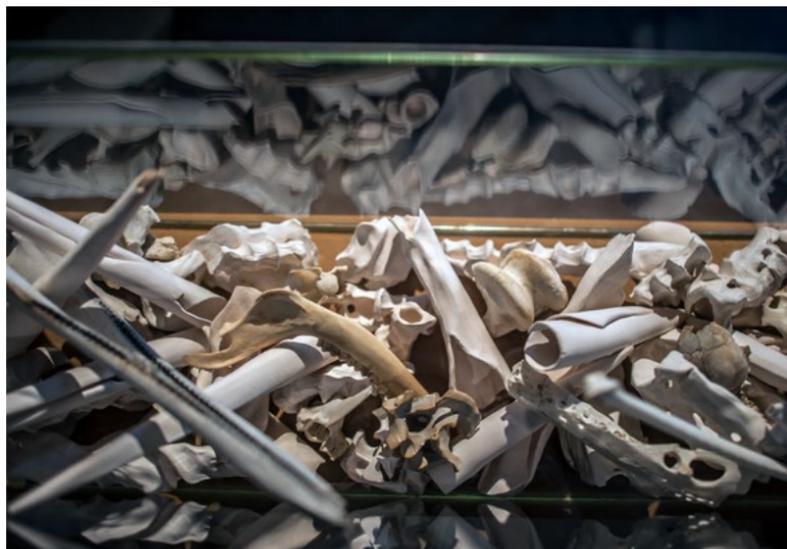
[Monstrum: latin, a divine omen, supernatural appearance, wonder, miracle, portent. quoddam novum; an abnormal shape, unnatural growth.]

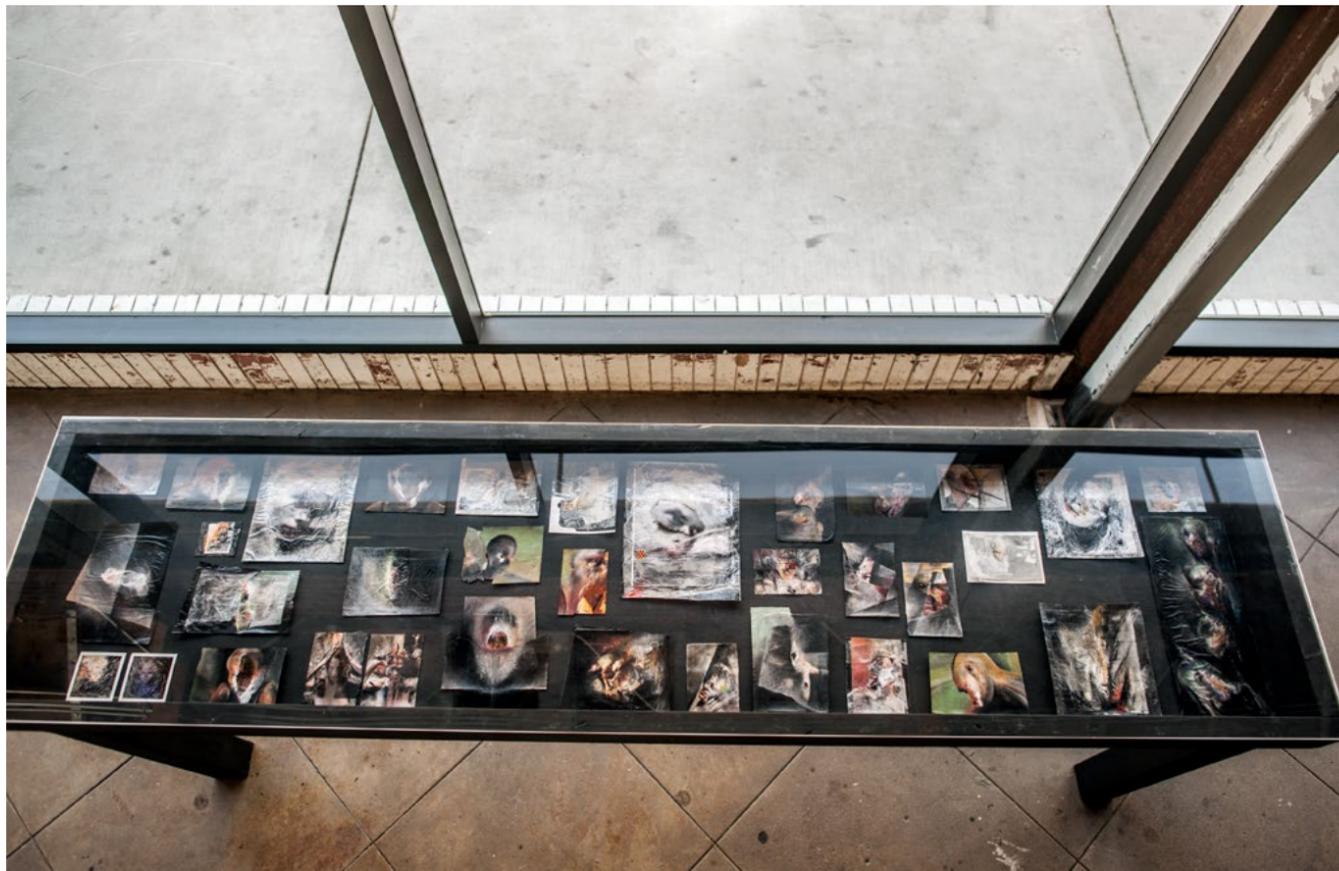
I like the duality of the word, life as a monstrous and wondrous event.

seduced by the title: ghosts, phantoms, ectoplasms, phantasmagory, past, pain, memory, fantasy and wonders. These words very much describe the universe of my early works.

The small mixed media collages that later gave birth to large cibachrome prints are haunted by disappearing figures, caught in some fantastic disintegration of the self, in a transitory transformational state. A large body of my work is obsessed with bodies. bodies losing their integrity, losing their definition, fragmented bodies, suspended, in limbo.

Destruction and reconstruction of the human figure, a subject much debated in art, destruction and reconstruction of a civilization, a subject much debated in history books. Private ghosts and collective ghosts may well be related.





“Melinda Smith Altshuler reconstitutes found objects. Having apparently outlived their mundane functions, such objects in Altshuler’s hands, become transformed into physical portmanteaux whose conjunctions not only revive their aura of functionality but induce poetic comprehension. They “mean” something they didn’t before, although that new meaning can inhere what they used to mean. They capitalize on our association—just as Altshuler capitalizes on her own associations in the act of re-fashioning, but also as they awaken less exact memories in us, metaphoric elisions and inexact segues that spring from the confusions of childhood and atavistic resonances the animal parts of our brains derive from shapes and materials, colors and textures. In this regard Altshuler follows, if indirectly, along the historical path of assemblage, ...”

-Peter Frank, 2014





*My Love she said she said he watches me
 The Baumeister standing still still in the void
 That waste land of hope impeding me
 To move even if it was
 Indispensable to avoid
 Her
 That melancholic toddler I once was
 Still am
 Oh Molyvann no forebode of impending griefs
 Could curb the high hopes you enjoyed
 Building that stadium yet no leaves
 No bodies yet
 I am your angel you had said
 I hope not I rejoined and I'm not sad
 The wings are off
 I own just smelly cloth
 The wind is gone the sewer's stench destroyed
 By deadlock
 No city noise just gasping from the runner's throat
 I know the ghosts are exercising in my back
 Progress is a wheezing breeze — are those the
 Gestures of pastness which I lack ?
 Is that my tune? At least
 I made the palm tree's shadow to protect your watching me
 I stand exposed silently watching back
 No word will leave my lips
 I need the tips*





I am fascinated by the power of photographs. My work has always involved the photographic moment—that moment when an image is irrevocably removed from its original time and space—and how that affects our perception of that moment.

Monuments involves the relationship between memories and objects, and how that is enhanced by the act of photographing. The work plays with photography's ability to transform objects into symbols, and how the significance of those symbols is influenced by scale. The size of these images—20" x 24"—is a reference to the Polaroid 20x24 camera, my personal monument to the vanished medium.

I am interested in the role of photography in creating cultural artifacts. Whether the objects in my photos have personal meaning for me is not important; the juxtaposition of these images is my reflection on the possibility for cultural meaning in the everyday.

As with all context-free photographs, any narrative or memories evoked by these objects can only be inferred by the viewer.





Monuments series (dust)

“In Khmer culture, Apsaras (female celestial spirits) are considered to embody the highest form of beauty, and have come to represent Cambodia almost as much as Angkor Wat. The most revered dancers in Cambodian history, and to this day, are women. Furthermore, in the Khmer language, the phrase for “straight man” is “ប្រុសត្រង់” (pronounced “broh pet”), which literally means “true man.” Suffice it to say, Ok’s identity in performing these traditional dances has been greeted by others with confusion, and even anger.

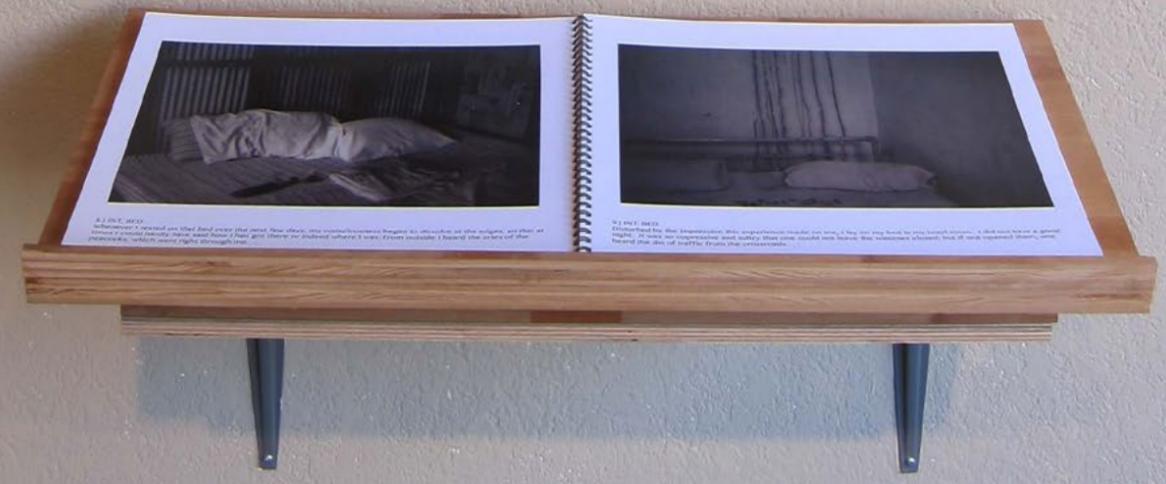
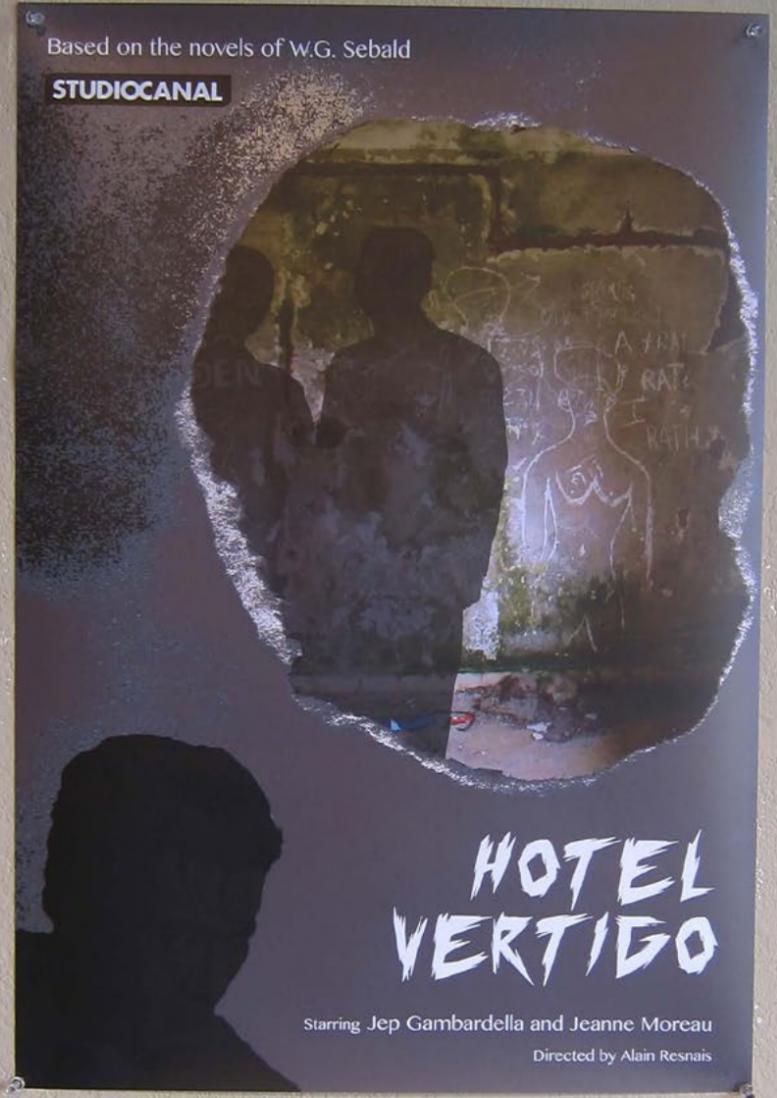
In 2013 at California State University Long Beach, Ok performed Robam Apsara, one of the Khmer tradition’s most cherished dances, nearly naked. Aside from his attire, which was simply a paired-down version of traditional costuming, Ok put on a faithful and indeed masterful performance. He did not contest but rather embodied the sensuality and delicacy the dance demands. How encouraging for queer Cambodians, to see a gay man boldly embodying one of Cambodia’s highest art forms.”

Ben Valentine <https://hyperallergic.com/316457/a-dancer-carves-a-queer-space-in-classic-khmer-performance/>



For the Hotel Vertigo installation, I assume the role of a production designer for a fictitious film set in Southeast Asia and inspired by the novels of W.G. Sebald. I have repurposed selected paintings, sculptures and architectural models to suggest the tone of the imagined film, its characters, locations and props. The book at the center of the installation comprises text from Sebald's novels paired with photographs of furniture and architecture. A description of a character lying in bed, seated at a table, entering a room or walking down a street is accompanied by a selection of images of beds, chairs, tables, rooms or streetscapes. The production designer of the imagined film would present this information to the director who would then choose from among the options the particular piece of furniture, the room or the exterior to be used in the film. The images are culled from my archive of approximately 5000 photographs taken over a period of thirty years in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, India, Italy, France and the United States.





“The Cambodian Civil War has, for the most part been forgotten by the general population of America. The USA has moved on to other wars and concerns, but Laotian/Cambodian/American Sayon Syprasoeuth brings the lasting consequences of that conflict into focus in his painting and sculpture. The Syprasoeuth family fled the Khmer Rouge in 1975 walking in darkness at night for two days, to safety in Thailand where they lived in refugee camps until 1979 when they were sponsored by a Lutheran Church group and moved to Iowa.

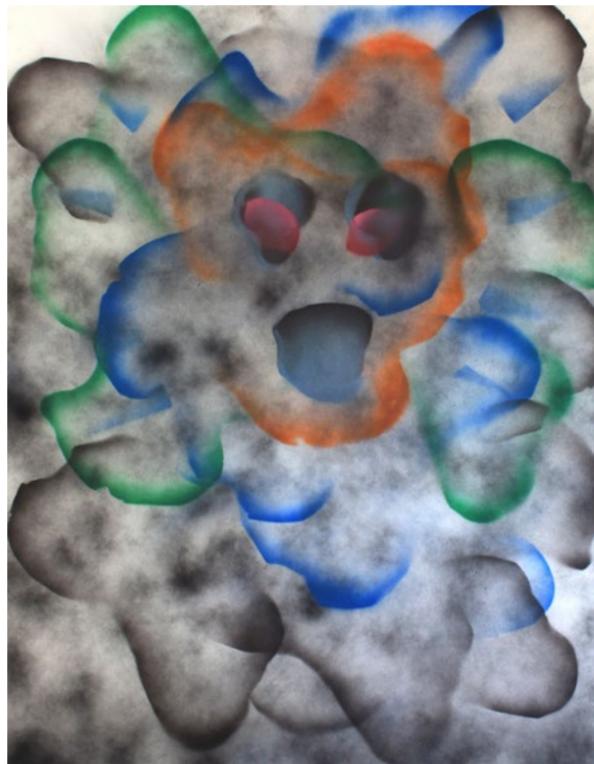
Sayon’s spiritual and fantasy like work is both beautiful and serious. He tells the story of his childhood, of the lives of his people and culture, their ancient traditions and contemporary issues, his struggle to fit in his new community while keeping his identity.”

-Cynthia Lum

“Since I am reflecting on fragility and ephemeral aspects of culture and life itself, it is my desire to bridge these parallel conditions and have them coexist on the same plane. .. I am negotiating a field of opposites, gesture and pattern, intuition and intellect, heroic and intimate, masculine and feminine.”

-Sayon Syprasoeuth





“What is a ghost? A tragedy doomed to repeat itself time and again? An instant of pain, perhaps? Something dead which still seems to be alive. An emotion suspended in time. Like a blurred photograph. Like an insect trapped in amber.”
Guillermo Del Toro, *The Devil's Backbone* (2001)

This quote (and the masterful imagery accompanying it) refers to going down the memory lane to a traumatic event during the Spanish Civil War. It is a very old thought seeing memory as an image that haunts us. Images, like writings, do not truthfully represent their subject (they still can come close, no matter how often we celebrate ‘The End of Representation’), they create a subject in its own right – as memories do. And, of course, it can happen: they replace the true, the real one – yet that should never go without consequences.

When Augustine wrote about how puzzled he felt about the sheer vastness of images stored inside of his mind, he mentioned the abstract memories of emotions, pain as well, how they were connected to imagery, and he wrote of the paradox: “Yet here I am, unable to comprehend the nature of my memory, when I cannot even speak of myself without it. How am I to explain it, when I am quite certain that I remember forgetting? (p 195)” Organizing those images, in Augustine’s sense, requires architectural order, rooms for the mind.

In Urbino, one can visit a Studiolo, chambers constructed for Federico de Montefeltro between 1474 and 1483 as a place to reflect, study and learn. No things, just images of them in abundance in trompe l’oeil technique presented on the walls thereby probably reflecting on the ideas of Augustine.

A gallery, so our thinking, would be a perfect contemporary place – for a limited time – to organize those artifacts of memory, each genre representing the whole. Quite an ambitious project.

Complicating is the idea of trauma, represented as memory floating through generations (as documented for the Holocaust), so the concept of having second-/third-generational artists working on representations of ‘those’ memories was a concept we could imagine to go for. Neither Augustine nor later theorists reflected on the existence or the aftermath of PTSD as we do today. And the influx of storytelling, documentaries, history books, ideological requirements (what church do you belong to?) is not helping to clarify the true meaning of – a feeling, a piece of art? To commission the right mood for this project required a trust and



a confidence, in our work and in our audience. We were quite pleased: over two thousand people came, and we heard many pleasant remarks (“The show is a huge success, it’s a highlight show for OCCCA!” “we are the talk of the town” etc). As well as the urgent plea: “Please, do not focus on those dark, horrible things from the past – we have to get over it!”. I’ve heard it even while we started to build up the first stages of the exhibition. They were heartfelt - but I think they were wrong. We should never forget, even when we acknowledge our memory, and our imagery, is flawed.

And, as W. G. Sebald remarked in an interview with KCRW: “.. the main scenes of horror are never directly addressed. I think it is sufficient to remind people, because we’ve all seen images, but these images militate against our capacity for discursive thinking, for reflecting upon these things. And also paralyze, as it were, our moral capacity. So the only way in which one can approach these things, in my view, is obliquely, tangentially, by reference rather than by direct confrontation.” That’s why Paula Goldman’s broken-hearted things have the same depth like Sayon Syp ‘s colorful recollections of some past, lost things, or the beautiful forest of Ken Gonzales-Day, where all the lynched people are erased (for their own dignity), or Marianne Magne’s ceramic graveyards of a mass slaughter of some fictional beings that reminds us of – (how many people articulated) Cambodia, or the weird artifacts quasi from abandoned swap markets for the few, collected, made by Melinda Altshuler, or just an image made of dust (Jayme Odgers).

And it is that feeling when we listen to Dengue Fever: a foreboding that sounds could get lost – again, as the performers Amy Kaps & BB tried desperately to restore words (like kids trapped by an ice-queen)..

Adam Thirlwell: “Ever since Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, the grand and modern wish has been for a separation of the aesthetic and the ethical. It is hard not to fall for this tradition. (I have always loved Thomas De Quincey’s great essay “On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts”: “Enough has been given to morality; now comes the turn of Taste and the Fine Arts.”) But the intricate problems of representing the Shoah demonstrate, I think, that this modern wish is impossible. For these problems are not specific to the Shoah. They show that questions of guilt will still be central to any aesthetics.”

So, what did we do? Conscience-stricken, we collected, like for a ‘Wunderkammer’, one piece from every genre: essay, drawing, sculpture, montage, altar, installation, painting, poem, performance, dance, live music, record, photography, video, film, and overlapping genres directing into a future of apps and digital tools. Ingrained into the short term memory of an exhibition place this combination has, of course, not the long lasting persistence of a Trompe-l’oeil-piece in Urbino – more contemporary: it is just disappearing like so many ‘old-school’ media. Humans do that, too. This catalogue is a poor and ephemeral document of their being, not even an ISBN-number will be provided.



"Remembrance after all, in essence is nothing other than a quotation." W.G. Sebald

CABINET OF GHOSTS



- Amy Kaps & Brutal Blondes
- Aragna Ker
- Dengue Fever
- Ichiro Irie together
with Lucas Kazansky
- Jayne Odgers
- Ken Gonzales-Day
- Marianne Magne
- Melinda Smith Altshuler
- Michael EB Detto
- Paula Goldman
- Prumsodun Ok
- Richard Turner
- Sayon Syprasoeuth



Amy Kaps

amykaps.com

Conceived in Columbus, Ohio, born in Brooklyn, New York, raised in suburban New Jersey, schooled in Upstate New York and Japan and Los Angeles, having at various times resided in Manhattan and Köln, Germany. Amy presently lives and works in Venice, California.

After acquiring a degree in Psychology, Amy headed back to New York City where by day she was the assistant to an art management consultant, and by night a performance artist, singer and club kid. This continued until she soon moved to Germany where she proceeded to explore my boundaries and the museums of Europe . There she concentrated on music and performance art and practiced radio and television journalism. Amy is also particularly proud of the fact that she learned to tap a keg of beer.

Upon returning to the states 13 years later, Amy shifted her focus to film.

Education

Skidmore College, BS in Psychology
LA Film School, Certificate in Directing Marina Abramovic Workshop 2015, UCSD

Awards

Best Experimental Film, 2016 Fine Arts Film Festival, VICA 1st Place Winner, 2014 One Shot: One World International Photography Awards/Lucie Foundation

Recent Performances

2016 Princess in Training Ariadne's Aberration
Salem2Salem Artist Residency, Schloss Salem, Germany Experiments in Nude: Life Drawing, A piece of Me, Litany of Lovers, Unraveled (in Pink)
Victus Versus_A Striped World
Artist in Residence, Eremitage-Weidengasse, Köln, Germany Dulcepalloza
2016, El Segundo, CA
2015 Victus Versus – A Striped World
Continental Drift, C May Gallery, PDC, West Hollywood, CA

Unraveled (in Rojo, Blanco y Azul)

Sponsored by the Arts and Cultural Bridge Foundation Nelson Dominguez Gallery, Havana, Cuba

Getting Wet

Schwabel Studio, Venice, CA

Spring Cleaning

Venice Art Crawl, Venice, CA

Aragna Ker (b. 1974, Phnom Penh, Cambodia)

aragnaker.see.me

aragnaker@yahoo.com

A native of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Aragna Ker was born in 1974. He immigrated to Southern California in 1981, at the age of six. After graduating high school in Los Angeles, Ker relocated to attend San Francisco Art Institute and graduated with a BFA in Painting in 1999. In 2004, he received his MFA in Sculpture at Claremont Graduate University.

Essential experiences serve as springboard for Ker's methodology. His playful works fuse cultural symbols and myth to explore the vast range of hybrid identities. His drawings and sculptures utilize the potency of motive to curiously attack simplistic materials. The United States Embassy in Cambodia, The Hammer Museum, The Pacific Asian Art Museum, Happy Lion Gallery and Sabina Lee Gallery are just some of the establishments that he has exhibited in. Aragna Ker is currently employed as an Art Instructor at First Street Gallery Art Center (Claremont, CA), providing artistic instruction to adults with disabilities.

Brutal Blondes

The Brutal Blondes were founded as a performance group in Munich in 1993. Members were Eva Pritscher and Susanne Detto. Susanne worked together with Amy Kaps for the performance at the opening day of Cabinet of Ghosts.

Dengue Fever (established 2001, Long Beach, CA.)

denguefevermusic.com

The band was formed in 2001 by Ethan Holtzman and his brother Zac after Ethan was inspired by a trip to Cambodia. As Ethan and Zac were searching for a vocalist to sing in Khmer, lead singer Chhom Nimol was discovered in a nightclub in the Little Phnom Penh area of Long Beach. She was already a well-known karaoke singer

in Cambodia, but decided to move to the United States after visiting her sister, and thought it was a good chance to make more money to send to her family back home. Zac is a vocalist and guitarist, formerly with Dieselhed, while Ethan plays the Farfisa organ. Rounding out the band are bassist Senon Williams (who played in Radar Bros until January 2009), drummer Paul Smith, and David Ralicke on brass.

Their self-titled debut album was released in 2003. All lyrics on the earlier albums are sung in Khmer, while the third album introduces some songs in English. Many of the songs are covers of 1960s Cambodian rock tunes by such artists as Sinn Sisamouth, Pan Ron, and Ros Serey Sothea, but some are originals, first written in English by the Holtzmans before being translated.

In 2005, the band toured Cambodia during the Bon Om Thook water festival, to critical acclaim. The documentary film *Sleepwalking Through the Mekong* documents the band's touring in Phnom Penh and other major Cambodian cities. There, singer Chhom Nimol, whose family included renowned singers from the 1970s onward, reconnected with the Cambodian fanbase, many of whom remembered the heyday of Cambodian rock from that era. The trip was a transforming experience for the rest of the band as they performed with master musicians and recorded new songs along the way, providing the band with new material. The film also reveals aspects of modern Cambodia, as the band crosses a cultural chasm with the same spirit as Cambodia's original rock pioneers.

Also in 2005, their second album, *Escape from Dragon House*, was released, containing more original songs. *Escape from Dragon House* was one of Amazon.com's Top 100 Editor's Picks of 2005. It was re-released on limited edition colored vinyl on August 26, 2008.

In June 2008, Real World Records released *Venus On Earth* in all territories outside of the U.S. and Canada. Peter Gabriel, founder of their new label, said of the deal, "We have Dengue Fever coming out on Real World Records (outside of the USA) - it's really cool stuff, with the small Cambodian singer and big American guys behind! They're California based but have taken 60's Cambodian pop as their main source of inspiration and it's done with a lot of style. It's spirited, impassioned stuff." *Venus On Earth* was selected as one of the best world music records of 2008 by the iTunes Store. Dengue Fever has entered into partnerships with a number of charitable organizations to support causes in Cambodia. They are involved with the wildlife and forest conservation organization Wildlife Alliance,^[4] and have donated recordings for charity records with the Sweet Relief Fund, a charity that aims to provide financial assistance to musicians dealing with illness, disability, or age-related issues. The group also compiled a collection of Cambodian rock music from the pre-Khmer Rouge era, entitled "Electric Cambodia", in 2010. All proceeds from this album were dedicated to Cam-

bodian Living Arts.

Dengue Fever were winners of the 8th annual Independent Music Awards for best World Fusion Album. (citation Wikipedia.org)

Ichiro Irie

www.ichiro-irie.com

Born in Tokyo and raised in Los Angeles, Ichiro Irie received his B.A. from University of California, Santa Barbara and his M.F.A. from Claremont Graduate University. In 2001, Irie went to Mexico City on a Fulbright fellowship.

Irie has exhibited his work internationally in galleries and museums in Los Angeles, New York, Mexico City, Tokyo, London, Warsaw, Frankfurt, Holland, Buenos Aires, Hong Kong and Singapore. He has had solo shows at O-Itatti gallery in Mexico City, Sam Francis Gallery in Santa Monica, CA, Yau-tepec Gallery in Mexico City, and eitoeiko gallery in Tokyo. Recent group exhibitions include Mexicali Bienial 2013 at VPAM and Sur Biennial 2011 in Los Angeles, *A Strange Affinity to the Beautiful and the Dreadful* at Hendershot gallery in New York, *Chockablock* at UAM, Long Beach, *The Crystal Jungle* at Museo del Chopo in Mexico City, *Subterraneans* at Torrance Art Museum in Torrance, CA, *Bleach* at Gallery Lara in Tokyo, and *100 Million Angels Singing* at Jens Fehring gallery in Frankfurt.

As a curator Irie has organized over 40 exhibitions at venues such as 18th Street Arts Center and Raid Projects in Los Angeles, Art & Idea and MUCA Roma in Mexico City, Campbell Works in London, Videor Art Foundation in Frankfurt, and Kyubidou Gallery in Tokyo. Between the years 2002 and 2007 he founded and edited the contemporary art publication *RiM* magazine. He is also owner and director of the artist run space JAUS in Los Angeles.

As a hobby, Irie is lead singer and songwriter for the alternative rock group Orphanette whose song *Baltic Sea* was recently featured on the *Walking Dead* video game soundtrack. Irie currently lives and works in Los Angeles, teaches at Oxnard College and Ryman Arts, and is an artist in residence at 18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica, CA.

Lucas Kazansky

www.cargocollective.com/lucaskazansky

Lucas Kazansky is a designer and media artist who works with experimental technologies in the creation of works of fine art, and commercial and industrial designs. He received his BA at UCLA in Design Media Art. As an artist, he has exhibited at UAM, Long Beach, JAUS, Los Angeles, Videor Art Foundation, Germany, 18th Street Art Center, Los Angeles, and Control Room, Los Angeles. Kazansky currently lives in Los Angeles, and works as an experimental designer for the augmented reality developer DAQRI. In December of 2014, Kazansky and artist Ichiro Irie collaborated on a two person exhibition at eitoeiko gallery in Tokyo, Japan.

Jayme Odgers

jaymeodgers.com

Jayme Odgers (b. 1939) is a painter and graphic designer. With a B.A. from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, Jayme is the recipient of numerous awards including a Fulbright Scholarship to Switzerland and over one hundred awards of excellence in graphic design. He was also selected to create an official poster for the 1984 XXIIIrd Olympiad held in Los Angeles along with such distinguished artists as David Hockney, Robert Rauschenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, Jonathan Borofsky, and John Baldessari.

His work has been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum, The San Francisco Museum of Art, Arco Center for the Visual Arts, The Albright Knox Museum and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, The Victoria & Albert Museum, London, England, with inclusion in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York City, The White House in Washington, D.C., And The Los Angeles Museum of Art .

In addition to his studio practice Jayme also has completed a public art commission designing two water fountains for the Metropolitan Water District's Headquarters Building at Union Station in downtown Los Angeles.

Numerous books and articles have included Odgers' work, most significantly The 20th Century Poster. Design of the Avant Garde (Abbeville Press, New York), POST-MODERNISM, Style and Subversion 1970-1990 at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London in 2102. His work is included in the latest Dictionary of Graphic Design and Designer by Thames & Hudson and Megg's History of Graphic Design.

Jayme has successfully taught at many renowned art departments in the Los Angeles area including Art Center College of Design, California Institute of the Arts and Otis College of Art and Design. At the invitation of the Tokyo Gakuin, he has recently

toured Japan as a guest speaker, lecturing in Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka.

Jayme Odgers lives and works in downtown Los Angeles.

Ken Gonzales-Day

www.kengonzalesday.com

www.kengonzalesday.com/contact.htm

Ken Gonzales-Day's interdisciplinary and conceptually grounded projects consider the history of photography, the construction of race, and the limits of representational systems ranging from the lynching photograph to museum display.

His work has been exhibited internationally and is in numerous collections including: Smithsonian Institution AAM; Getty Research Institute; LACMA; Art Gallery of NWS; Los Angeles MTA; Santa Barbara Museum of Art; Eileen Harris Norton Foundation; L'Ecole des beaux-arts, Paris; among others. Monographs include: Lynching in the West: 1850-1935 (Duke, 2006) and Profiled (LACMA, 2011) . He is represented by Luis De Jesus Los Angeles.

Solo exhibitions include: Luis De Jesus Los Angeles; Galerie Steph, Singapore; The Vincent Price Museum, LA; Fred Torres Collaborations, NYC; Tufts University, MA; Las Cienegas Projects, L.A.; UCSD Art Gallery, La Jolla; LAXART, L.A.; CUE Art Foundation, NY; Pomona College, Claremont; Susanne Vielmetter, L. A.; White Columns, NY, among others.

His work in the Collections of: Smithsonian Institution American Art Museum; Getty Research Institute; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; City of Los Angeles; Metropolitan Transit Authority, L.A.; Santa Barbara Museum of Art; Eileen Harris Norton Foundation; Pomona College Museum of Art; Scripps College, Claremont; L'Ecole des beaux-arts, Paris; and Museum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, among others.

Gonzales-Day is Professor and Chair of the Art Department at Scripps College.

Marianne Magne

Visual artist and experimental filmmaker, Marianne Magne uses drawing and digital distortion to create imaginary microcosms. Borrowing from biological mechanisms her video animations evolve organically, splitting from the cellular level to more complex entities. Her work grows out of the concept of life as an evolutionary process,

from its origin to its hypothetical future, using the human body as a starting point for multi-disciplinary experiments.

Born in Paris, M. Magne migrated to Los Angeles in 1991 where she currently lives and works. She uses video as a means of getting her 2D work into motion using large screens or site specific projections. A parallel body of work that integrates writing and deconstructed narration lead to the production of experimental short films that have been screened throughout Europe, the Middle East and North America. In Los Angeles, she has collaborated with musicians A. Perich & D. Day [Ockham's Razor] to create dynamic audio-visual scapes, and participated in several staged pieces performed by duo shape shifters *osseus labyrinth*.

Melinda Smith Altshuler

1971-1976 California State University, Northridge Studio Art, Cultural Anthropology
1961-1966 Painting Apprentice Art Education under Samuel Markitante.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2016 stART Up Art Fair LA, Los Angeles, CA

Melinda Smith Altshuler reconstitutes found objects. Having apparently outlived their mundane functions
2014 States Of Perpetual Consequence V. Vorres Gallery, San Francisco CA

2010 From The Cloud Lab The Antelope Valley College, Antelope Valley CA

2008 Absence And Elsewhere Bandini Art, Culver City CA

2005 Matter & Acts Davis & Cline Gallery, Ashland OR

2004 Within/ Without Sarah Lee Artworks & Projects, Santa Monica CA

2000 looking for nothing Frumkin / Duval Gallery Bergamot Station, Santa Monica CA

1999 Cercando Nulla Palazzo Dei Consoli Gubbio, Italy

HONORS

1997 Artist's Residency Dal Campo D'Osservazione Gubbio, Italy

Michael EB Detto

Michael E.B. Detto is a Los Angeles based artist who works mainly in fine art photography. He was born in Berlin and remembers the day the Berlin Wall was built, separating the post WW II city in two. His passion for reading as a child introduced him to illustrated books with fairy tales and comics. That initiated his passion for

books, images, and how they interact.

He studied Humanities at the University of Hamburg. His main interest was the Italian Renaissance, and his research was devoted to the way Dante's work was reflected in Italian art, and conversely how Dante's imagery anticipated time management in moving pictures, or how banderoles act in illuminated manuscripts and altar pieces. After leaving the university he worked as a professional photographer in journalism, architecture and portraiture.

While studying at the film school in Łódź, Poland, he created a short film in 1995 which was inspired by a work of poet Wisława Szymborska.

He gave up commercial photography and continued playing with memory, light and shadow. His theme and technique is exploring allegory enhanced by the means of montage. He is most interested in the shadow as a representation of the real world, and its past. Cultural memory, as well as the private one work as representations of our identity today. As all representation is deeply flawed in its claim representing any truth, the remnants of traumatic events can leave marks in every piece of art, through generations. This led to his group exhibition 'Cabinet of Ghosts' at OCCCA in 2015.

Paula Goldman

Paula Goldman's photographic work involves reinterpreting cultural manifestations of natural and emotional phenomena. After receiving her BFA from the University of Michigan School of Art, she relocated to Houston, Texas, where she became a founding member of the Houston Center for Photography. She received an MFA in photography from the California Institute of the Arts. Her exhibitions and publications include the LACE Annuale, Los Angeles, CA; Px3, Paris; *The World From Here*, UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; G2 Gallery, Los Angeles; *Time Capsule*, Creative Time, NYC; *Photometro*, San Francisco; the Houston Center for Photography; *Framework*, LACPS, Los Angeles; *Women and Their Work*, Austin; and public projects in Seattle and Santa Monica, CA. Her work is in various private collections; the Museum of Fine Art, Houston; and Metro Art/MTA, Los Angeles.

Paula lives, works, and teaches in Los Angeles, CA.

Prumsodun Ok

Prumsodun Ok (b. 1987) is an artist, teacher, writer, and cultural activist committed to the positive transformation of our world. His interdisciplinary performances

contemplate “the avant-garde in antiquity,” mining the tradition of Khmer classical dance to explore the intersection of contemporary social issues with new possibilities for performance. His original works have been presented at REDCAT (Los Angeles), CounterPULSE (San Francisco), OUTSider Fest (Austin), Teatro Benito Juárez (Mexico), Khmer Arts Theater (Cambodia), bhive (Greece), and at an international conference co-hosted by the Society of Dance History Scholars and the Congress on Research in Dance.

Ok’s writings on art, culture, and sexuality have been published by Salon.com, THOAMADA II, In Dance Magazine, and featured by the California Dance Network. In 2012, he published his first book: *Moni Mekhala and Ream Eysa*. Featuring additional contributions from award-winning choreographer Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, cultural anthropologist Toni Shapiro-Phim, and visual artist Brian Mendez, the book retells the sacred tale of the same name to explore cycles of knowledge, love, and violence as well as the realities of today’s women. It was favorably reviewed in the Asian Theatre Journal as “a *sampeah kru* ritual of a sort: an offering to teachers living and deceased and to Moni Mekhala [the Goddess of the Ocean] herself.”

Ok has a strong history of creating platforms for which to bring diverse ideas, approaches, and communities together. He has directed and produced the SFAI Asian Performance Series in San Francisco and curated programs for INTERCITY (Phnom Penh) and Anatomy Riot (Los Angeles). In 2013, he brought a compelling group of artists, scholars, activists, and volunteers from all across the United States for *Children of Refugees*, a forum which explored the rich breadth of the refugee experience through engaging talks and performances and raised money and awareness for the Syrian refugee crisis.

Ok is the honored recipient of grants and fellowships from TED, Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP), Choreographers in Mentorship Exchange (CHIME), Durfee Foundation, Center for Cultural Innovation, and the Network of Ensemble Theaters among others. He has spoken about his work and the art of Khmer dance at Directors Lab West, UCLA, and NYU as part of Season of Cambodia.

Currently, Ok is associate artistic director of Khmer Arts and serves on the board of directors of the Alliance for California Traditional Arts.

Richard Turner

www.turnerprojects.com

Artist/curator Richard Turner is a Professor Emeritus at Chapman University where he taught contemporary Asian art history and studio art. He lived in Saigon, Vietnam from 1959–1961. He studied Chinese painting and language in Taipei in 1963–1964 and Indian miniature painting in Jaipur, Rajasthan in 1967 - 1968 while on a Fulbright scholarship. As Director of Chapman University’s Guggenheim Gallery, he curated

over seventy exhibitions. His current studio work is sculptures and drawings based on Chinese scholars’ rocks and Japanese viewing stones.

Mr. Turner has worked as a public artist for over thirty years on projects ranging from metro stations, public parks and water treatment facilities to a justice center, veterans’ memorial and a university chapel. He has worked independently and as a member of a design team, collaborated with architects, engineers, landscape architects and other artists. His public work is guided by a desire to make pieces that are accessible but not obvious, pieces that reveal themselves over time to a diverse audience. His travels in Asia inform his work. He also brings his experience as a university professor, administrator and gallery director to the public art process.

Sayon Syprasoeuth

www.sayonart.com

Syprasoeuth@yahoo.com

An interdisciplinary artist, focusing on his personal story as a refugee from Cambodia. He grew up in Thai refugee camps, and emigrated to the United States at the age of ten. His work addresses past and present issues; triggered by memories of war and trauma, beliefs—spiritual dimensions and life in contemporary time in the United States. His work has been shown in Cambodia, China, Berlin and throughout the United States. He received his BFA from CSULB in 2003 and MFA from Claremont Graduate University (CGU) in 2007.

Since 2008 he has been a Coordinator for Global Hybrid; an arts exchange between artists in Cambodia, Korea and United States. He is currently an arts advisor for Applied Social Research Institute of Cambodia (ASRIC) a not-for-profit organization devoted to restoring, distributing, and implementing procedural justice for Cambodian American victims and survivors of the Khmer Rouge.



references

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