

Press Release

## Seeds and Memory: Asian Diaspora Reimagined

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

We are delighted to unveil an upcoming dual event: a book premiere and an experimental exhibition titled *Seeds and Memory*—a divergent ensemble of non-binary transmigratory spirits coalescing to embody an emergent creative collective, on the move: visual artists, poets, scholars, urban planners, and activists, expressing a rich heritage of Asian diasporic maternal lineages—Tamil, Hmong, Laotian, Kazakh, Filipina, Indian, Chinese, Korean, and more.

### The Experimental Exhibition

From **October 24 to 29, 2023**, [My Gallery NYC](#) will serve as the backdrop for an exhibition that melds installation art, performance, and community engagement—a mosaic of voices articulating multiple ways of knowing and being in the transmigration of Asian diasporic life. Our week-long festivities will reach a zenith with a mesmerizing performance on **Saturday, October 28, from 7–8:30 p.m.**



## The Artists' Book

This book is a gastronomic journey through stories, recipes, and artistic imagination. It challenges the undervaluation of culinary traditions and posits food as a language for communicating the transforming lived realities and aspirations of Asian diasporic communities. Seeds, integral to the narratives of family recipes contributed by women and non-binary humans, become metaphorical vehicles for transformation. These seeds manifest as temporary tattoos, embodying an ephemeral form of visual storytelling—a codified language and an ancestral practice linking the margins of society. The pairing of culinary traditions with tattoos becomes a counter-narrative, redefining the meaning of resistance and self-expression.

## The Installation as a Portal to Future Temples

In a time marked by displacements and constantly shifting identities, the artists envisage an immersive experience that delves deeply into society's intricate weave, probing how the notion of belonging has been sculpted in the Asian diaspora. The installation transforms My Gallery NYC from October 24 to 29 into a dynamic, self-sustaining microcosm, a world within a world where seeds become narratives and visitors metamorphose into avian agents of change. Upon entering this sanctum, each visitor becomes a 'bird,' vested with the autonomy to move and scatter seeds throughout the space. The space becomes an ethereal, transcendental domain—a fluid, ever-evolving landscape catalyzing a multi-sensory engagement with the art, ancestral pasts, potential futures, static dwelling, and dynamic moving.

Adding a further layer of complexity and intrigue, the artists construct the installation as a Portal to Future Temples, opening avenues for contemplation about spiritual and societal constructs that may come to be. Here, 'temple' is a metaphor for places of gathering, unity, shared experiences, and wisdom. As envisioned by the artists, the temple of the future is one of inclusivity, where we celebrate the failure of 'belonging' and embrace the potentialities of uncertain, fluid formations of community gatherings and creative collectives, resonating with the dynamism that illuminates humans as co-creating creatures in ecological relationships with our more than human relatives in the avian, terrestrial, aquatic, and microbial worlds.



## The Communal Altar

We extend an invitation to co-create a communal altar—an installation that allows artists to contribute to this symbolic edifice each day from 2–5 p.m., with curated materials provided. Moreover, on October 26, from 7–8:30 p.m, the wider community is encouraged to join in this collaborative endeavor.

## The Performance

Our week-long festivities will reach a zenith with a mesmerizing performance on Saturday, October 28, from 7–8:30 p.m. During this evocative convergence, authors and performers will sit adjacent to their neon-infused installations, sharing their stories in a reciprocity of listening and narrating.

This project is sponsored, in part, by the Greater New York Arts Development Fund of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), administered by Brooklyn Arts Council, and is fiscally sponsored by the New York Foundation for the Arts.

## For More Information

To delve deeper into the art and literature encompassing "Seeds and Memory," please visit:

- [Wearable Stories Book](#)

This is more than an artists' book and exhibition—it's a vibrant community of storytellers, artists, and spectators. We invite you to be part of this remarkable journey to sow seeds and create memories that defy boundaries, breaking new ground in the fertile soil of collective imagination and cultural dialogues.

## Contact Information:

**My Gallery NYC** 587 Franklin Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11238  
Phone: (347) 446-5837

### Project director, lead collaborator: Fei Li

Email: [Contact@feili.us](mailto:Contact@feili.us)

Phone: 917.551.0186

Project Website: <https://www.whentheyhavetheirownhistorians.info/>

### Accented Projects:

Website: <https://accentedprojects.com/>



### Artists in this Book:



**Aurvi Sharma** has received the NYFA Fellowship in Nonfiction and the AWP Kurt Brown Prize as well as awards from Gulf Coast, Prairie Schooner and Wasafiri. A Bread Loaf-Rona Jaffe Foundation Scholar, she has been awarded fellowships from Yaddo, MacDowell, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Santa Fe Art Institute, Tin House, and Sarai. Aurvi's work has been anthologised in the Best American Experimental Writing 2020 and her essays are notables in the Best American Essays. Her work has also appeared in Bon Appétit, Kenyon Review and Guernica, among others. Born and raised in north India, Aurvi is working on a memoir about River Yamuna and the disobedient women who once occupied its banks.



**Dr. Yamuna Sangarasivam** is professor of anthropology and director of the Women & Gender Studies Program at Nazareth University. She engages her interdisciplinary training in musicology, dance ethnology, cultural-political anthropology, transnational feminist and queer epistemologies and ontologies to inform her studies of terrorism, nationalism, resistance, and the politics of race. Her book, *Nationalism, Terrorism, Patriotism: A Speculative Ethnography of War* (2021) was published by Palgrave Macmillan. Inspired by her parents and grandparents to honor an ever-evolving transnational sense of self rooted in Tamil Eelam along with an awareness of ourselves as ecologically interdependent living beings, her recent scholarly and artistic endeavors in the study of food cosmogonies invites her to journey into the fabulatory arts of culinary worlding to build solidarities across space and time.



**Melissa Joseph** is a New York based artist and independent curator. Her work considers themes of memory, family history, and the politics of how we occupy spaces. She intentionally alludes to the labors of women as well as experiences as a second generation American and the unique juxtapositions of diasporic life. Her work has been shown at the Delaware Contemporary, Woodmere Art Museum, Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Brattleboro Museum and Art Center, Jeffrey Deitch Projects, MOCA Arlington and List Gallery at Swarthmore College. She has been featured in *Hyperallergic*, *Artnet*, *New American Paintings*, *Le Monde*, *CNN*, and *Architectural Digest* and participated in residencies including *Dieu Donn e*, *Fountainhead*, the Archie Bray Foundation for Ceramic Arts, the Museum of Arts and Design and upcoming at Greenwich House Pottery in 2023. She is a regular contributor to *BOMB* magazine.



**Milagros "Mica" Verendia** Coming from an international and multi-cultural background, Mica's work ethos and approach reflects her values – inclusive, accessible and human-centered, with a creative flair for the narrative arts. With a degree in International Affairs, she set out to work in international civil service, and held several positions in communications at the United Nations. She then shifted to lending her skill set to the arts and cultural institutions. Today, Mica consult with both spheres, as well as social media figures with impactful objectives. Her work has reached millions of people globally, providing safe containers for healing, empowerment and mutual aid in vast landscapes, and have been translated into many different languages. Past clients include several agencies within the United Nations, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Community Organized Relief Efforts (CORE), Brooklyn Museum

and Big Little Feelings, Inc. Mica is most interested in community care as praxis towards abolition. She has a strong interest in how humans connect, and the many-fold layers and modalities this involves. Her curatorial practice is founded on non-violent and accessible communication, which are all baked into the DNA of everything she does, mainly in service of mostly BIPOC and immigrant communities.



**Pacyinz Lyfoung**, an Asian American poet, attorney, and activist, presents an intersectional narrative marked by her Hmong roots and dual French and American cultural heritage. Her trajectory from her birthplace in France to her growth and evolution in Minnesota offers a panoramic view of her life's journey.

Bilingual in French and English, Pacyinz carries the relics of her family's diasporic experiences imprinted in her linguistic finesse. This distinct heritage frames her artistic endeavors, colored by her steadfast journey to master her ancestral Hmong language. Her poetry has been her bridge to her family and community legacies, especially that of her paternal grandfather, Phagna Touby Lyfoung. The story of Touby and his family reflects the story of the Hmong People finding pathways to full integration into their homelands,

whether the Kingdom of Laos or the United States: breaking new grounds, making the Hmong name sound far and wide, and being of service to their homelands is the legacy of Phagna Touby Lyfoung, who was bestowed the title of "Lord Whose Name is Heard from Far Away" by the King of Laos.

Pacyinz's involvement in artistic projects is characterized by a deep-seated delight and a belief in the transformative power of collective creativity to shape a more compassionate world. She is at an exciting juncture in her career, poised to publish her first poetry collection—fulfilling one of her late father's wishes. She is currently based in Washington-DC.



**Rabiga Marx** is a Berlin-based artist and researcher with roots in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. She identifies as a "Nomadic Art(ist) Historian," embodying a conduit role that connects diverse cultural spectra.

Marx's primary focus revolves around the identities of contemporary artists from Central Asia, illuminating their nuanced roles within the global art milieu. Her work is a junction for differing cultural paradigms and temporalities, creating a dialogue between tradition and modernity, familiar and foreign.

Driven by her personal experiences of straddling varied cultural landscapes and timeframes, Marx's investigations and creations explore identity construction among "glocal" artists in the global art scene. Her perspective is keenly interested in the interplay of cultural memory within these contexts.

Marx's commitment to decolonization further challenges conventional narratives, dismantling embedded hierarchies and actively facilitating a more inclusive understanding and representation of artists in the global art community.



**Sammy Lee** studied fine art and media art at UCLA and architecture at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her artwork has been exhibited internationally and is in collections at the Getty Research Institute, Denver Art Museum, and the Spanish National Library in Madrid. Among her many accomplishments, highlights include a performative collaboration with Yo-Yo Ma during the Bach project tour in 2018. Lee is a Fulbright US scholar to S. Korea for 2023-2024 and the founder of a contemporary art and residency space called Collective SML | k in Santa Fe Art District, Denver. Sammy Lee's art merges traditions of craft and installation while employing her Eastern and Western identities. Her work blends spatial, human, and temporal boundaries by deploying various materials and processes—paper, sumi ink, books, rubbings, sculpting,

and architecture.

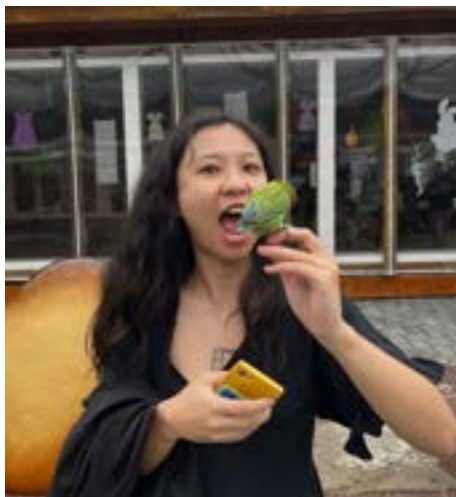


**Gloria Lau** 劉君蕙 (she/her) is a designer and visual artist based in Brooklyn with roots in Hong Kong and California. Her creative practice centers on co-designing places and visualizing stories to amplify marginalized narratives, illustrate collective imaginaries, and actualize community-led visions. Her professional experience in landscape architecture and urban planning focuses on public space, resilient infrastructure, and community-centered design. As a visual artist, she is also the co-founder of Laudi CoLab art collaboratives that document and illustrate undervalued stories in the built environment. Gloria merges art and archival research to explore the interplay of urban and natural landscape and the interlinks between spatial systems, culture, and identity. She is a Laundromat Project Create Change

Fellow, a NEW INC member, a Bandung Resident, and an Urban Design Forum Forefront Fellow.



**Louise Yeung** 楊浩怡 (she/they) strives to envision and build a better world as an urban planner and visual artist of the Hong Kong diaspora. Through printmaking and painting, Louise explores migratory relationships and collective memories among people, plants, and animals who transform new environments to call home. Louise's creative practice is shaped by her vocational work in climate policy and organizing. Louise is a 2023 Bandung Resident, a program through MoCADA and Asian American Alliance for the Arts through which she is documenting Black and Asian traditions of herbal healing to foster new forms of community care. Louise is also an Advisory Board member of the Octavia Project, which uses the creative power of speculative fiction, art, and science to engage femme and nonbinary teens in imagining greater possibilities for our future.



**April Z** is a neurodivergent person born in China. She has been an aspiring competitive gamer, a groupie-turned-bar-singer, a failed-new-media-artist, and started a DIY project space called Tutu Gallery in Brooklyn. During her free time, she likes to take walks, swing, and google anything that comes up in her mind. Her special interests include contemporary art, psychology, and affective labor. She is good at bantering, writing, touching, and making things happen.



**Sidian Liu** is a photo-based artist, translator, and home builder. She makes images, performance, installations to build a sanctuary for personal and collective emotions triggered by the ever-shifting contemporary world. Leading a liquid, fragmented urban life, she seizes photography as a means to construct or subvert, to create a safe space in response to the issue of displacement. A lot of her works are participatory and interactive, establishing a space to feel belonged through exchanging energy with the audience.

Sidian is the recipient of Top 10 of 9th Annual Photography Rankings in China, 2022, "Kunpeng Award" of China Young Photographer Promotion Plan, the 21st Pingyao International Photography Festival, 2021, the top prize of First Female Photographer Competition by Miroir Project, 2021, and the top prize of

Banshan Photography Award, 2020, etc. Her translation works have been published on LEAP. She has also translated for Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art, and various art institutions, Pro Helvetia Shanghai, Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum, Wu Space, Aranya Art Center etc.



**Peach Tao** is a Brooklyn-based muralist, teaching artist and illustrator. Born and raised in Beijing, China, she received a BFA in illustration and printmaking from Savannah College of Art and Design. In the summer of 2020, she paired up with local activist Karlin Chan to breathe life into the Chinatown Mural Project. Their vision was to usher vibrancy and renewed energy into Manhattan's Chinatown through the creation of evocative murals that embody Chinese American life. Their endeavor, designed to reinvigorate local businesses and draw people back into the neighborhood, was met with acclaim and earned widespread recognition, including features on CBS News and NY1.

Peach's broad artistic impact is further demonstrated through her collaborations with numerous organizations like NYC Health+Hospitals, ThriveCollective, Groundswell, The LISA Project, East Village Walls, and The Bushwick Collective. Their shared mission—to beautify New York City's public schools and spaces—harmonizes seamlessly with Peach's passion for utilizing art to transform communal spaces.

Peach is her nickname because her family name (陶Tao) shares the same pronunciation of Peach (桃Tao) in Chinese.



**Victoria Romulo** is a Filipina-American photographer based in Brooklyn, New York.

Born in Manila, Philippines, and then moved to Chesapeake, Virginia at the age of 8, Victoria's immigration experience left her yearning for the person she would have been if she had never moved, and curious about the people she could have become had her parents picked any number of different cities. Today she expresses those feelings through her photography: seeing the possibilities of people she could have become in everyday moments, objects, and strangers — giving her work a cinematic and romantic lens.

#### **Lead Collaborator: Fei Li**



Born in Minna, China, and based in Lenapehoking (Brooklyn), Fei Li is an interdisciplinary artist whose artistic practice revolves around community-led and collaborative public rituals, drawing on ancient wisdom while addressing contemporary concerns to foster a more interconnected society. The essence of her work lies in challenging conventional forms, narratives, and Western frameworks by leveraging the transformative potential of alternative media and collective efforts.

Li is the awardee of numerous funded artist's residencies, fellowships, and grants, including the 2023 Create Change Fellowship of Laundromat project, the 2021 Milton and Sally Michel Avery Residency for a Visual Artist at Yaddo, the 2017 Jon Imber Painting Fellowship at Vermont Studio Center; City Artist Corps Grant and Queens Arts Fund New Works Grant. She founded the collaboration platform Accented Projects, which seeks to transcend boundaries, foster collective action, and catalyze social change.