

NOT NOW BUT NOW

MFA Preview Exhibition

Deanna Barahona JAX Jun!yi Min
Naomi Nadreau Chanell Stone Nathan Storey

The first MFA in Visual Arts group exhibition held in Mandeville Art Gallery since 2015, *NOT NOW BUT NOW* features six emerging artists who reckon with the impossibility of now through urgent evocations of past and future.

Spanning photography, film/video, printmaking, sculpture, drawing, and performance, the works in the exhibition reimagine communal archives and ancestral histories, contest colonial narratives of progress and discovery, and portray the body as defiantly present, undergoing constant movement and transformation.

Chanell Stone's contributions to this exhibition consist of a pair of large-scale photographs made within the Mississippi River by way of Louisiana. The pieces are titled *River Wading* and *Silt*. Informed by a visceral enactment of a nonlinear migration from the American West to the Deep South, she deposits her body back into the ancestral land of her descendants. These works explore the role dislocation and relocation have had on the Black body's corporeality, episodic memory, and national identity.

Jun!yi Min explores themes of home and belonging, whether in the body, the body bag, or within the realms of family — be it with blood, chosen, or those who have passed on. She embraces the raw and immediate beauty of birth and its awkward emergence. Celebrating recalled and shared memories, **Deanna Barahona** explores the intersection of celebration, family tradition, and domestic spaces rooted in ancestral origins. **Nathan Storey's** work traces the relationship between printed matter and queer memory, collectivity, liberation, and loss. His current bodies of work, *Traces* and *Stains*, suggest printed matter as a facilitator, mediator, witness, and residue of gay desire.

Through material processes, meridian theory, and a speculative lens to transform objects, **Naomi Nadreau** explores the transformative potential of objects, plants, and dirt, suggesting that they possess a life of their own, that undergoes material and narrative transformation. In this exhibition, the existence of objects and materials they work with is artifact, dead, alive, discarded, and new.

Immersed in a paradox of “this & that”—this being the performance and that being the documentation—**JAX** works with her ancestral past, as a point of reference in her practice, focusing on iteration and reiteration of not only the reference but also the medium of hair. There is a constant reciprocity between and within that metaphysical timeline. She states, “I am in love with this infinity, the reference loop, the now but not now.”

The artists in this exhibition explore the concept of *NOT NOW BUT NOW* in their art practice and acknowledge their

existence in the nexus of life. This serves as a call to action to be present, engage with the past, and convey the impossibility of the present while simultaneously envisioning the future.

— Text compiled by **Naomi Nadreau** in collaboration with **Deanna Barahona, JAX, Jun!yi Min, Chanell Stone, and Nathan Storey**

Artist Biographies & Statements

Deanna Barahona is a first-generation multidisciplinary artist from Southern California. Her practice is inspired by her Guatemalan-Salvadoran upbringing and centers on the aesthetics of adornment and exchanges of ephemera. Barahona has been producing mixed-media art that incorporates textiles, photography, installation, sculpture, and bookmaking. Informed by her parents' homeland, her work is characterized by vibrant colors and a playful aesthetic. Through her art, she examines the connection between her family's geographical origins to the diasporic experience in Southern California. Barahona's work has been in exhibitions at Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles; Bread + Salt, San Diego, and Island 83 Gallery in New York City. She has an upcoming solo exhibition at the San Luis Obispo Museum of Art in the winter of 2024.

Artist Statement:

My work centers my lived experiences, identity, and personal objects in intimate and domestic spaces through the creation of sculpture, installation, and photography. I look at the homes I grew up in and the objects that shape these interiors, specifically the characteristics within the Latin-American diaspora. I am interested in the colored walls, cartoon plushies, written letters, and the abundance of archives and heirlooms that have been passed down and exchanged across households. I pay attention to the detailed forms of decoration that unite Southern California homes with the ones my family migrated from. I see ornaments collected as a means to heal and fill voids created by distance, separation, and time. My practice works through themes of collection, obsession, familial kinship, and symbolic expressions of love and romance.

— **Deanna Barahona**
www.deannabarahona.com

JAX is an interdisciplinary artist from Los Angeles, CA. Her academic focus is on energy transference through Africanized hair as a through-line medium and site of exaggeration. She completed her B.A. in Art Practice, African-American Studies, and Creative Writing at UC Berkeley in 2021. She is a current UCSD Visual Arts MFA candidate in her 3rd and final year in the program, expected to graduate in the Spring of 2024

Artist Statement:

In my practice, I use hair in performance, sculpture, video, and installation in extreme exaggeration, as a dedication to and an open letter for my maternal ancestry with a specification on my mtDNA line; the DNA line that connects you to the first woman, the mitochondrial Eve. My interest lies in what gets downloaded in the womb. I believe individual lacerations from your ancestry are transferable intergenerationally. There is a tremendous depth of labyrinthine hardware downloaded onto every new motherboard; operating per the programming; because of you, I am. My desire in art making is to interrogate while also appreciating the culturally and mentally significant ways in which the Black elder woman's home is both imagined and prescribed. It is my fascination with my connection to a distant ancestry both spiritually and physically, that evolved into using shadow work through an artistic lens; art as a means to perform exorcism. Shadow work, in short, is unshrouding the darkness of the unconscious psyche; who are you really and who do you pretend not to be? I think it's fun to spin around in the pool of shadows; disturb the waters and say thank you.

– JAX

www.Balladoftheincensed.com

Jun!yi Min (she/her) is a performance artist from Singapore living and working in San Diego. She is currently pursuing her MFA in Visual Arts at UC San Diego. Jun!'s works deal with queering Asian familial ties and queer Asian inscrutability. Her durational performances challenge her audience's sensitivity to looking and call the audience to witness and extend care to the enduring body. Jun! has performed at Bread and Salt, Teatro Morelos, and St Paul's Episcopal Church. She was part of a group exhibition at Project [Blank], The Northfield Arts Guild, and has also received a grant to perform at the Qualcomm Institute in 2022. Jun! also performed and curated *Queering the Table* at Mingei Museum, a one-day gathering dedicated to queer Asians in San Diego.

Artist Statement:

My performances have been about holding things that cause pain. As my immigrant identity solidifies, my desire to find a sense of home buds a secondary gesture: learning to hold things with memories of pain. I am learning to hold my Chinese parents, my childhood memories in Singapore, and my transfeminine body. To me, these are all painful things I am ultimately residing with and in. In my performances, I change clothes in a cocoon/body bag, spend the night in the blade of a bulldozer in search of a semblance of home, and

eat sunflower seeds with my father on Zoom to build separate sunflower husk mountains together – two mountains split by the ocean between Singapore and the United States. Pain and discomfort arise in my performances through contradictory desires. I endure them to fight for the simultaneous inhabitation of these desires in one body, even if for a moment. The body can hold multiplicities. The body can hold contradictions. But to survive, the marginal trans immigrant body is required to hold both multiplicities and contradictions. I do not want to just survive. Survival is too close to sacrifice, an act my Chinese body is well-endowed with. The Chinese treat sacrifice as an act of love; we endure pain for something important to us. The endurance of pain is akin to love, but I refuse to love from a body sacrificed. I want to love from a body reclaimed: one with a mind and spirit. To do so, from a body already half-bitten into, my performances build and reconstruct. Whether it be a line between father and daughter, or a bridge for the mind and body. As witnesses, I ask my audiences to sit with slow change and to navigate the line between digesting and consuming a struggling body.

– Jun!yi Min

@performancesandpain

Naomi Nadreau (they/she) is an interdisciplinary artist from Los Angeles, CA. Their practice utilizes found objects, natural materials, and ceramics evoking the otherness of self-possession and the pursuit of alternative means of existence through tropes of Science Fiction, guided by acupuncture meridians, Haitian object histories, and material. Naomi is a caretaker of objects and materials recognizing the fragility and power of illegibility. They received their BA in Painting and an MA in Visual Arts from California State University, Northridge. She is a University of California San Diego, MFA candidate in Visual Arts. They have recently exhibited at Labyrinth in New Mexico, Espacio Negativo Gallery in Guadalajara, Pangée in Montreal, and participated in various group shows across Southern California.

Artist Statement:

My practice utilizes found objects, plaster, ceramics, natural materials, and dirt that are bound together that lie between our reality and their fiction. Drawing from nightmare dreams, acupuncture meridians, Haitian objects, and science fiction tropes, I create a system that has the possibility of traveling to the past, present, or future from beings that could be a person or alien or thing. Interested in how the body navigates space and objects, I am currently focused on making installations and sculptures that help us to focus on spaces that we normally don't pay attention to, such as the ground and the invisible channels of healing. I ask questions about how one pays attention to their surroundings and the details below. I am continuing my investigation into the material to communicate and balance reality and unreality, including material curiosity when approaching the work.

– Naomi Nadreau

www.naomisquared.com

Chanell Stone (b.1992 Los Angeles) is an artist living and working in Southern California. Through self-portraiture, collage, and poetry Stone investigates the Black body's intersectional states of being and connection to the natural world. Her practice negotiates potentialities for reconciliation and reprieve by upending historical and ancestral memories within the American landscape. Stone earned her BFA in photography from the California College of the Arts in 2019 and is currently an MFA Candidate in Visual Arts at the University of California San Diego (2024). She has exhibited in galleries across the United States and internationally. Her solo exhibition "Natura Negra" appeared at the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco in 2019-20. More recently, Stone's work has been displayed at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Pier 24 Photography, Museo Cabanas in Guadalajara, and Fotografiska New York. Stone has been featured in several publications including *The New York Times*, *NPR*, *California Sunday*, *Pop Up Magazine*, and *Vogue*.

Artist Statement:

My work investigates the Black body's intersectional states of being and connection to the natural world. I challenge racialized power structures that contest our connection to the American landscape and search for ancestral points of origin obscured by slavery and the Great Migration. My self-portraits are informed by my familial archive and reimagined through the urban landscape. Using my body as the primary material, I act as a conduit between individual and collective Black diasporic narratives. My penultimate aim is to shine light on these obfuscated histories of joy, pain, and reprieve while creating space for future healing and repatriation in the American landscape. As a Black woman artist working heavily in self-portraiture, I constantly reckon with representations of the Black female body. I push past hegemonic stereotypes, to foreground imagery derived from authentic lived experience, my own gaze, and personal subjectivity. Wading between the body and the land I search for overlap and rupture within these figurations.

– **Chanell Stone**
www.chanellstone.com

Nathan Storey is an interdisciplinary artist from Texas working in photography, performance, and printmaking. Storey's practice traces the relationship between printed matter and queer survival. His current research investigates gay ephemera, fragments, and stains, entangling a boundless relationship between memory and desire. Storey has participated in exhibitions and performances at 80WSE Gallery, New York; PS120, Berlin; Assembly Room, New York; Prattsville Art Center, Catskills; Bread + Salt, San Diego; Honey's, Brooklyn; Espacio Negativo, Guadalajara; New York University, New York; Columbia University, New York; University of California San Diego, La Jolla; and the Houston Center for Photography, Houston. Storey's work has been featured in MATTE Magazine, New York; Queer Aesthetics Journal, San Francisco; and HereIn Journal, San Diego. Storey holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with high honors from New York University. In 2019, they founded SUBLIMATION, supporting exploratory and

cross-disciplinary works by underrepresented and queer artists at STELLAR PROJECTS in New York's Lower East Side. He is currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts at the University of California San Diego.

Artist Statement:

My interdisciplinary studio practice often engages with gay archives such as queer nightclub flyers, photographs from the Gay Rodeo, *STRAIGHT TO HELL* zines, and artists of the AIDS crisis' work, notes, and ephemera as a way of keeping their work alive. I simultaneously construct my own diaristic archive of gay intimacy, longing, and pain, questioning where personal and collective memory meet. In *Cruising Utopia*, José Esteban Muñoz contends, "the key to queering evidence, and by that I mean the ways in which we prove queerness and read queerness, is by suturing it to the concept of ephemera. Think of ephemera as a trace, the remains, the things that are left, hanging in the air like a rumor." Traces, remains, the things that are left, glimmers, residues, and stains are the windows into queerness. Printed matter contains vestiges of loss, intimacy, and melancholy. To touch the queer archive, flip through it, handle it, and embrace it is to encounter stains of memory and desire.

– **Nathan Storey**
www.nathanstoreyarchive.com

Public Programs

Thursday, January 11, 2023, 6-8 pm: *NOT NOW BUT NOW* Opening Celebration. Featuring a live performance of "a practice for a home without a ceiling" by **Jun!yi Min** at 7:30pm.
Thursday, February 1, 6-8pm: Artist-led tour of the exhibition
Saturday, February 3, 2pm-3pm: Closing performance of "a practice for a home without a ceiling" by **Jun!yi Min**

All events are free and take place in person at the Mandeville Art Gallery unless indicated otherwise. Please consult mandevilleartgallery.ucsd.edu for a full description of programs.

About the Mandeville Art Gallery

The Mandeville Art Gallery, previously known as the University Art Gallery, is a long-standing fixture on the UC San Diego campus with a five-decade history of presenting innovative art in the context of a major research university. Managed by the School of Arts and Humanities and located on the west end of Mandeville Center, the Mandeville Art Gallery operates as a venue for artistic exhibitions and events serving both the university and the local community, and it newly re-opened after extensive renovations in March 2023.



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UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Department of Visual Arts

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