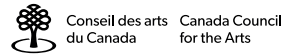


This exhibition would not have been possible without the generosity, assistance, and support of many people, including Ho Tam, Pao Houa Her, Bopha Chhay with and independently of Artspeak, Xenia Fink for contributions beyond her obviously crucial artistic ones, Shaun Dacey and the Richmond Art Gallery, Linnea Anderson and the Social Welfare History Archives at the University of Minnesota, Stephen Novak and the Archives & Special Collections at the Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library at Columbia University, University of Minnesota Press, Coffee House Press, and Alexandre Jay at Print Print.

It goes without saying that this exhibition also could not have happened without the artists in it, but the energy and commitment that Sun Yung and Jinny invested into this project—and to the larger *unstateley* project over multiple years—deserves a special note of admiration.

This exhibition gratefully acknowledges funding from the British Columbia Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts. Jinny Yu also acknowledges support from the Canada Council for the Arts.



no. 1 of 3

Pao Houa Her: Emplotment
Or Gallery
June 2 to July 18, 2020

no. 2 of 3

granted to a foreign citizen
Artspeak
published October 2020

unstateley is a series of programs curated by Godfre Leung on the fragility of the nation state. It proposes the practice of fiction as a strategy to combat a global failure of the human imagination. Running from spring 2020 to spring 2021, its first transmission, a series of photographs by Pao Houa Her, appeared on public sites in Vancouver during the shutdown in April and May, 2020. The exhibition it was meant to accompany opened at Or Gallery in June. Sun Yung Shin's book *granted to a foreign citizen*, which also appears in the current exhibition, followed in the fall.



unstateley | no. 3 of 3

Guesthood and Alienhood

Sun Yung Shin, Jinny Yu, Republic of the Other

March 20 – May 1
curated by Godfre Leung

Hotam Press Bookshop/Gallery
218 E. 4th Ave., Vancouver, BC

신선영 Sun Yung Shin was born in Korea and is a writer and poet based in Minneapolis. She is the author of three books of poetry, most recently *Unbearable Splendor* (Coffee House Press, 2016, winner of a Minnesota Book Award), editor of *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2016), co-editor of the landmark anthology *Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption* (2006, reprinted by University of Minnesota Press, 2021), and author of the children's book *Cooper's Lesson* (Lee & Low Books, 2004). Her forthcoming essay anthology *What We Hunger For: Refugees & Immigrants on Food & Family* will be released on April 6, 2021; her co-written children's book *Where We Come From* (Lerner Books) will be published in 2022; her fourth collection of poems *The Wet Hex* is due out in 2022. Presently, her poems "Autoclonography" and "Replication" are featured in the 13th Gwangju Biennale.

Republic of the Other (RotO) started with Xenia Fink (São Paulo / Berlin) and Jinny Yu (Seoul / Ottawa), a few years after their first meeting in New York at the International Studio & Curatorial Program in 2011. RotO gathered under the shared experience of feeling foreign everywhere and claims it as a positive state. Their work has been shown at Kunstpunkt Berlin (Berlin, 2017), Union Art Fair (Seoul, 2017), and Galerie 101 (Ottawa, 2019).

Jinny Yu's work grows out of an inquiry into the medium of painting as a means of trying to understand the world around us. A transnational artist, she lives and works on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation and in Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include *Hôte* (Galerie Art Mûr, Montréal, 2020), *Perpetual Guest* (Galerie UQO, Gatineau, 2019), and *I Like My Countries and My Countries Like Me* (Korean Cultural Centre, Ottawa, 2019). Her exhibition *Don't They Ever Stop Migrating?* was presented as part of the 56th Venice Biennale. Yu's work has been shown widely, including exhibitions in Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, Portugal, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and USA. She is represented by Art Mûr.

Godfre Leung is a critic and curator based in the territory currently known as Vancouver. His writing has appeared in magazines such as *ArtAsiaPacific*, *Art in America*, *C Magazine*, *The Third Rail*, and *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, and has been commissioned for publications by a number of institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art and Walker Art Center. As part of his serial curatorial project *unstateley*, he recently organized the exhibition *Pao Houa Her: Emplotment* (Or Gallery, 2020) and commissioned and edited the poetry chapbook *granted to a foreign citizen* by Sun Yung Shin (Artspeak, 2020). *Guesthood and Alienhood* is *unstateley's* third and final program.

FYI—I began to rewrite this introductory text on Thursday, March 18, two days after I fell asleep to the news of the mass murder of six Asian women and two others in Atlanta.

“When I practice visitation, I am not visiting you. I am visiting our children’s future homelands. I am *their* guest, not yours.”

—Eve Tuck and Karyn Recollet, “Visitations (you are not alone)”

“Their unsovereign alien status was a precondition of their exploitation and intersects with the multiple economic logics that require and reproduce alien-ness in settler colonies.”

—Iyko Day, *Alien Capital*

This exhibition presents bookwork by Sun Yung Shin, Jinny Yu, and Republic of the Other, accompanied by several supporting artefacts and antecedents displayed on the walls.

The artists’ respective and collaborative works all begin from their geographic dislocation. As they each delineate the terms of their presence—which sometimes is an absence—in territories to which they are not native, they triangulate positions in relation to the cardinal points of *guesthood* and *alienhood*. In this exhibition, the medium of the book, in its elasticity and ability to circulate with few constraints, is a prosthetic for the limits of bodies, physical spaces, and geopolitical borders.

Guesthood is something that one does. When we acknowledge that we are uninvited guests (and mean it), it is a speculative act. Our practices of taking up space are meant to imagine priorities to be different than what we are used to. *Alienhood* is something that is done to us. It is a way of living with our taking up of space being a marked term, and us always being made to feel it.

This was not conceived as an exhibition about the Asian diasporic condition, but, partially due to Shin and Yu’s mutual interest in each other’s work, it became one. It was clear long before COVID-19 that their works’ shared concerns with mobilities, border politics, and perceived foreign parasitism could be redirected as acutely Asian questions. Reframed as an investigation into the complexities of Asian mobilities and discourses of Asian virality, *Guesthood and Alienhood* offers our dislocation as its own science fiction.

This exhibition debuts Shin and Yu’s collaborative book *바리데기: A Hole Is Born*, created in a generative, back and forth exchange of drawings and poems. Their collaboration took place in late winter and spring of 2021 over email and a Drive folder, initiated by Yu in Berlin and completed while she was in quarantine in Ottawa, with Shin corresponding in Minneapolis for the duration.

In the last week, poet and essayist Cathy Park Hong’s chapter on the late Theresa Hak Kyung Cha in her memoir *Minor Feelings* has become essential reading on a condition of *alienhood* that, as we’re seeing unfold after Tuesday, doesn’t even allow for our victimization to be directly acknowledged. Taking on the work of an investigative journalist, Hong brings to light far more about the rape and murder of Cha in 1982 than either the authorities at the time or literary history since have cared to know. But Hong’s chapter is really a story about kinship, namely an intergenerational transmission between three Korean-American women poets, via the introduction of Hong to Cha’s work in the mid-’90s by her mentor, Myung Mi Kim. This exhibition is also really a story about kinship.

—Godfre Leung, March 19, 2021

Exhibition Checklist

far pedestal (from entrance)

Sun Yung Shin, *granted to a foreign citizen*, 2020

Sun Yung Shin and Alexander Hage, *Specimens of Immortality*, 2020

Republic of the Other, *What does Other mean to you?*, 2020

left wall (from left to right)

Sun Yung Shin, _____ *Replace a Dead Child*, 2021

Sun Yung Shin, *Proxy / In the Orient / the warmth and love of your homes*, 2021

Photograph of Harry Holt and his family, circa 1950s (courtesy of Social Welfare History Archives, Archives and Special Collections, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota)

Memo from Viola W. Bernard to Mrs. Florence Brown, July 12, 1961 (courtesy of Archives & Special Collections, Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library, Columbia University)

Harry Holt, letter, circa 1955 (courtesy of Social Welfare History Archives, as per above)

corner pedestal

Sun Yung Shin and Jinny Yu, *바리데기: A Hole Is Born*, 2021

right wall

Jinny Yu, *Don’t They Ever Stop Migrating?* (photo by Francesco Allegretto), Venice Biennale, 2015

Jinny Yu, *Don’t They Ever Stop Migrating?* (photo by Darrell Edwards), The Rooms, 2016

Jinny Yu, *Don’t They Ever Stop Migrating?* (photo by Tim Forbes), Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2018

centre pedestal

Republic of the Other, *Little Gray Book*, 2017

table

Jinny Yu, *HÔTE*, 2021

window (exterior)

Sun Yung Shin, *The Hospitality of Strangers*, 2016