Where have I arrived?
May 3–July 22, 2023
Works by
Lotus Laurie Kang, Brubey Hu, and Patrick Cruz
Curated by Sherry Chunqing Liu

This exhibition is produced as part of the requirements for the MVS degree in Curatorial Studies at the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, University of Toronto.

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2023 MVS Curatorial Studies Projects

my final prayer
Curated by atif mikhail khan
May 3–July 22, 2023
University of Toronto Art Centre

Tumbling in Harness
Curated by Erin Reznick
May 3–July 22, 2023
Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

acts of preservation / acts of decay
Curated by Erin Storus
May 3–31, 2023
Clark Quadrangle, University College
This polaroid of a couple of green plants on the balcony of my childhood home in Xiamen, China, somehow became one of my only remaining pieces of documentation of that house. I carried it with me throughout my time in Canada, even when I moved east across the country for school. Most of my polaroids depict people. Usually, they depict me and my loved ones. This image, however, only captures a few potted plants on iron railings against a dark background. Yet, when I see it, I remember that it was only a test run, that it was a photograph I snapped upon opening a new box of polaroid film, that the photo was in fact taken during the day, that the plants were mainly taken care of by my grandma, and that the inscription, "2015 Balcony of Xiamen Home," was a later addition, a caption I put down in black ink by the time I was in Canada and had begun to fear I would forget the year the image was taken. This spontaneous capture of a little corner of that familiar yet distant home evokes a much larger diaspora space, one that extends beyond my spatial memory of that home. Where is this mental space to which I am attached?

In Brubey Hu's 2022 exhibition "Leftovers and Euphemism" at 42" X 28" in Xiamen, the artist explores the idea of "mother" through stories of her grandmother (whom she has never met) and of her mother seed. 5

On arrival, Ahmed writes:

"Diasporic spaces do not simply begin to take shape with the arrival of migrant bodies; it is more that we only notice the arrival of those who appear ‘out of place.’ Those who are ‘in place’ also must arrive; they must get ‘here,’ but their arrival is more easily forgotten, or is not even noticed." 6

As you enter these diaspora spaces, you might also gently whisper, “Where have I arrived?” For now, I leave these spaces to you. I leave them, of course, untranslated.

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Sociologist Avtar Brah defines “diaspora space (as opposed to that of diaspora)” as a conceptual category that “includes the entanglement, the intertwining of the genealogies of dispersion with those of ‘staying put.’” 2 In the reconciliation of such “entanglement,” diasporian subjects, as scholar Sara Ahmed describes, take up unfamiliar spaces with their bodies to inhabit as scholar Sara Ahmed describes, take up such “entanglement,” diasporian subjects, of ‘staying put.’”1 In the reconciliation of the entanglement, the intertwining of as a conceptual category that “includes space (as opposed to that of diaspora)” Sociologist Avtar Brah defines “diaspora home. Where is this mental space to which I am attached?

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About the Curator

Sherry Chunqing Liu is a curator, writer, designer, and artist based in Toronto and Vancouver, Canada. Born in Xiamen, China, she moved to Canada in 2013. She holds a BA in Architecture and is currently a Master of Visual Studies candidate at the University of Toronto. Her recent exhibitions include Morris Lum: Those Unforgotten (2022–23) and Clinic into the Future (2022). Sherry’s curatorial practice focuses on community engagement and site-specificity with consideration to social issues. Her work has been published and featured on U of T News, The Varsity, Richmond News, Demo Magazine, The Strand, and more. (sherryliu.ca)

Curator's Acknowledgments

I extend my deepest gratitude to Barbara Fischer for believing in and supporting this project from day one; to my advisors Charlene K. Lau and Luis Jacob for their invaluable guidance; to my artists Lotus, Brubey, and Patrick for their inspiring works, incredible efforts, and trust; to the MVS cohort (Erin S, Atif, Erin R, Sarah, Durga, Nimisha, Omolola) for ever-fruitful discussions; to Gareth, Jean-Paul, Charles, Zach, and Swapnaa for their generous teachings; to the Art Museum team for their expertise; and to my friends, family, and dear partner Michael Wang for their encouragements and lovely support throughout this journey.

Public Programs

Opening Reception
Wednesday, May 3, 6pm–8pm
University of Toronto Art Centre

Curatorial Tour with Sherry Chunqing Liu
Friday, June 23, 2pm–3pm
University of Toronto Art Centre

All programs are free and open to all. Visit artmuseum.utoronto.ca/programs for more information.

Exhibition Tours

The Art Museum offers in-person guided exhibition tours for classes and groups. For more information or to book a tour, email artmuseum@utoronto.ca.

Staff

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Visiting the Art Museum

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
7 Hart House Circle
Toronto, Ontario M5S 3H3
Tuesday 12 noon–5pm
Wednesday 12 noon–8pm
Thursday 12 noon–5pm
Friday 12 noon–5pm
Saturday 12 noon–5pm
Sunday Closed
Closed on statutory holidays.
Admission is FREE.