

## Winter/Spring 2024 Exhibitions

**Announcing Major Surveys of Sky Hopinka, Jessica Jackson Hutchins, Stephanie Syjuco, and First Museum Solo Show by Seattle's Mary Ann Peters**

*Presentations by Samantha Wall and Antonia Kuo with Martin Wong*

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Seattle, WA  
November 30, 2023

In the first half of 2024 the Frye Art Museum presents six new exhibitions that further our goal to connect the global to the local, opening with solo presentations from **Jessica Jackson Hutchins** and **Sky Hopinka**—artists of international renown with deep ties to the Pacific Northwest. ***Subterranean Ceremonies*** marks Sky Hopinka's first solo museum exhibition in his home state of Washington. ***Wrecked and Righteous*** offers a twenty-year survey of Portland-based Jackson Hutchins's sculptural assemblages as well as a new two-story fused glass window commissioned for the rotunda entrance of the Frye's distinctive Olson Sundberg Kundig–designed building. The Boren Banner Series public art initiative continues with a suite of new works by **Samantha Wall** centered on a serpent-woman figure that offer nuanced portrayals of femininity and investigate the experience of navigating transcultural identity. In later spring, the museum presents the survey ***Stephanie Syjuco: After/Images***, featuring a new installation based on the artist's research in Seattle's Filipino American community. Seattle artist **Mary Ann Peters** receives her first solo museum exhibition, which brings together for the first time the ten abstract drawings of the series *this trembling turf*, including one from the Frye's collection. And the museum expands an informal series of exhibitions exploring intergenerational artistic dialogues with ***Twilight Child: Antonia Kuo and Martin Wong***—two queer diasporic Chinese artists born more than forty years apart. Developed in close collaboration with Kuo, the exhibition features Wong's rarely exhibited biomorphic clay sculptures from the 1960s and 70s, alongside selected paintings and archival materials from across his career. "The winter/spring exhibition program reinforces the Frye's commitment to support the vision of contemporary artists, especially those who live and work in our region and create work with broad impact," notes Executive Director Jamilee Lacy. "We are proud to provide free access to diverse creative projects exploring the urgent issues of our time."



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## **Jessica Jackson Hutchins: *Wrecked and Righteous***

January 27–May 5, 2024

Jessica Jackson Hutchins (born 1971, Chicago) has been plumbing the relationship between art and everyday life for nearly thirty years, playfully melding materials with an intuitive, “by any means necessary” approach to traditional mediums and found objects alike. Based in Portland, Oregon, Jackson Hutchins gained international recognition for her expressive sculptural assemblages that combine castoff household items with handmade elements to redefine notions of value and beauty. In 2016, her work expanded into fused glass, including vibrant, collage-like windows that bring a form associated with exalted spiritual spaces into the secular realm. Though she is internationally recognized and has exhibited widely, *Wrecked and Righteous* is the artist’s first solo museum exhibition on the West Coast and the most comprehensive yet in the Pacific Northwest, her home since 2005.

While Jackson Hutchins has rarely shown works from various stages of her career together, typically developing new bodies of work for each exhibition, *Wrecked and Righteous* comprises works created—and sometimes reconfigured—since the late 1990s. The nonchronological presentation surveys her pursuit of immediacy and communion through art, beginning in the museum’s rotunda entryway with a richly textured, two-story fused-glass window commissioned for the occasion. In the galleries, the artist’s relief paintings, intimate tabletop objects, and needlepoint compositions mingle with selected furniture sculptures—well-worn

sofas and chairs cradling lumpy ceramic forms that read as surrogates for the human body.

The corporeal aspect of Jackson Hutchins's work comes to the fore in a recent group of wearable food vessels that will be activated during a special performance. These pieces function to hold food and beverages that the performers ladle, pour, peel, fling, and offer to one another while contorting themselves to the demands of their individual ceramic charge. The exhibition connects these unwieldy "prostheses" to the artist's early *milagros* sculptures: totemic papier-mâché body parts she made for suffering people close to her or in the public eye.

"I'm excited to bring the wearable ceramic pieces to the West Coast for the first time and to work with the incredible dancers of the group Physical Education to activate them," shares exhibition curator Amanda Donnan. "There are also quite a few smaller works in the show that no one has seen in a long time—Jessica pulled things out of storage that even she hasn't laid eyes on for years but has fallen in love with all over again. It's really a very personal, reflective exhibition, and I feel honored to help Jessica bring it into the world." Drawing a throughline of vulnerability, interdependency, and repair across Hutchins's practice, *Wrecked and Righteous* honors the artist's special capacity for finding the sublime in ordinary places and neglected things.

## PUBLICATION

The exhibition is accompanied by a free experimental publication in the form of an abecedarium—or ABCs of Jessica Jackson Hutchins—coproduced by exhibition curator Amanda Donnan and the artist as a playful yet impactful primary on Jackson Hutchins's influences, approach, and philosophy of artmaking.

## ARTIST BIO

**Jessica Jackson Hutchins** has recently presented solo exhibitions at Columbus College of Art and Design, Columbus, OH (2016); the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT (2014); the Hepworth Wakefield Museum, West Yorkshire, UK (2013); the Broad Art Museum, East Lansing, MI (2013); and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2011). Significant group exhibitions include *Makeshift* at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI (2018), where Hutchins first premiered her performance work; *The Encyclopedic Palace*, 55th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2013); and *The Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2010). Her work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Brooklyn Museum; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and the Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR. In 2022, Hutchins was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and in 2020, received the Merit Medal for Sculpture from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Hutchins holds a BA in Art History from Oberlin College and an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

*Jessica Jackson Hutchins: Wrecked and Righteous* is organized by Amanda Donnan, Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions. Generous support provided by the Frye Foundation and Frye Members.

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**Image:** Jessica Jackson Hutchins. *Wishlist*, 2015. Sofa, papier-mâché, collage, resin, glazed ceramic. Sofa: 28 x 92 x 36 in.; wall: 61 x 85 x 9 in. Courtesy of the artist and Adams and Ollman, Portland. Photo: Mario Gallucci



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## ***Sky Hopinka:*** ***Subterranean Ceremonies***

February 17–May 26, 2024

Sky Hopinka (Ho-Chunk Nation/Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians, born 1984, Ferndale, Washington) layers imagery and poetic prose to create art that foregrounds relationships between communities, landscape, and language. His work intermingles English and Indigenous dialects such as Chinuk Wawa (which Hopinka notes he embarked upon learning in tandem with photography and filmmaking), a revived Chinookan creole of the Pacific Northwest, to consider how language shapes perception of place and acts as a container of culture. This presentation—the artist’s first solo museum exhibition in the Northwest—features four recent films and new photographs that focus on personal and political notions of Indigenous homeland.

Growing up in Washington State, far from his ancestral tribal lands in Wisconsin and Southern California, Hopinka traveled the western powwow circuit with his parents. These foundational experiences of itinerancy continue to influence his artistic practice. The films in *Subterranean Ceremonies* revolve around transit and life on the road, a liminal zone the artist embraces as a space of community and knowledge production. *Mnemonics of Shape and Reason* (2021), for example, interweaves scattered landscapes to ruminate on the spiritual implications of colonial plunder, while *The Island Weights* (2021) narrates a journey along the boundaries of Ho-Chunk homelands in search of four water spirits from the tribe’s creation story.

Hopinka's project of Indigenous language recovery and translation is threaded through the exhibition. Coming of age without learning his geographically distant ancestral languages prompted the artist—then living in Washington and Oregon—to learn a language indigenous to the Pacific Northwest: Chinuk Wawa. The film *Kicking the Clouds* (2021) centers on a fifty-year-old audio recording of the artist's grandmother learning the Pechanga language from her mother. Hopinka combines the original recording with his mother's reflections on the tape and their lives, as well as footage of their "chosen home" in Whatcom County, Washington: a place far from the family's ancestral homelands but described by the artist as "a home nonetheless."

The photographs in the exhibition glimpse disparate locations linked through the artist's travels and include phrases he etches around their borders, drawn from stories, songs, and his own poetry. Together, the works reflect an ethos of wandering—an approach that allows Hopinka's work to resist static depictions of Indigenous cultures and move fluidly between past and present.

## **PUBLICATION**

The exhibition is accompanied by a free publication featuring a poetic essay commissioned by the Frye from Stó:lō scholar and artist Dylan Robinson.

## **ARTIST BIO**

**Sky Hopinka** received a BA (2012) from Portland State University and an MFA (2016) from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. Formerly an assistant professor in the Film and Electronic Arts Program at Bard College, Hopinka will begin an assistant professorship at Harvard University in 2024. His work has been shown at numerous film festivals including Sundance, Park City and Salt Lake City, UT; Courtisane, Ghent; Punto de Vista, Pamplona; Milwaukee Film Festival; Chicago Underground Film Festival; Toronto International Film Festival; and Ann Arbor Film Festival. He has also exhibited work at venues including Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, NY; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Hopinka is a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin and a descendent of the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians. He was a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University in 2018–2019, a Sundance Art of Nonfiction Fellow for 2019, an Art Matters Fellow in 2019, a recipient of a 2020 Alpert Award for Film/Video, a 2020 Guggenheim Fellow, and was a 2021 Forge Project Fellow. He received the 2022 Infinity Award in Art from the International Center of Photography and was a 2022 MacArthur Fellow.

*Sky Hopinka: Subterranean Ceremonies* is organized by Georgia Erger, Associate Curator, and Amanda Donnan, Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions. This exhibition is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art. Lead individual support provided by Rhoda Altom and Cory Carlson. Generous additional support provided by the Frye Foundation and Frye Members.

The Terra Foundation for American Art, established in 1978 and having offices in Chicago and Paris, supports organizations and individuals locally and globally with the aim of fostering intercultural dialogues and encouraging transformative practices that expand narratives of American art, through the foundation's grant program, collection, and initiatives.

**TERRA**  
FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART

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**Image:** Sky Hopinka. *Mnemonics of Shape and Reason* (still), 2021. Digital video (color, sound); 4:12 min.





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## ***Boren Banner Series: Samantha Wall***

April 10–October 6, 2024

In a suite of new works for the Boren Banner Series, Samantha Wall (born 1977, Seoul) combines intricate, hand-cut stencils with drawn elements to depict a serpent-woman—a character that appears across cultures and historical eras. In Western mythology this figure is often portrayed as grotesque and menacing, but in Korean lore the goddess Epsin takes the form of a pitch-black snake with ears who protects the home. Referencing the snake's multifaceted symbols, Wall presents femininity as a powerful, liminal state of being.

Across her work, the Portland artist challenges archaic representations of women who, in her words, "deviate from the narrow definitions of socially acceptable behavior." Her perspective as a Black-Korean immigrant in the United States serves as a foundation for nuanced drawings of herself and others, which often focus on biracial women and the experience of navigating transcultural identity. Through a meticulous process of layering and blending textures, Wall crafts multidimensional compositions that convey the rich inner lives of her subjects.

She joins a growing group of contemporary artists who are embracing symbolic figuration and challenging the primacy of the male colonial gaze. Wall notes: "A longing to rediscover

lost cultural histories, revealing narratives that have shaped me, forms the backbone of research... Ultimately, my drawings are a reflection of my experiences as a woman navigating a world that often marginalizes and exoticizes those who are perceived as Other. I aim to evoke the primal and instinctual nature of the serpent-woman, highlighting her femininity and sensuality. In doing so, I hope to challenge the traditional dichotomy of the feminine as passive and the Other as threatening or exotic.”

## ARTIST BIO

**Samantha Wall** lives and works in Portland. She immigrated to the United States as a child and comes from a multiracial background. Operating from within this framework, her drawings embody the experience of navigating transcultural identity through portraiture, gesture, and ritual practices. Wall has exhibited work at the Hangaram Art Museum in the Seoul Arts Center, CUE Art Foundation in New York, and the Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR, as well as exhibition spaces in New Orleans, Los Angeles, and Frankfurt. She is the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including an MFA Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, a Golden Spot Residency Award from Crow's Shadow Institute for the Arts, and a Hallie Ford Fellowship from the Ford Family Foundation.

## ABOUT THE BOREN BANNER SERIES

The Boren Banner Series reflects the museum’s commitment to showcasing work by Pacific Northwest artists. This biannual series gives regional artists the opportunity to present a piece as a monumental, 16 x 20 ft. vinyl “banner” alongside an exhibition of related works inside the museum. The billboard-size artwork is prominently sited facing Boren Avenue, the Frye’s most visible and accessible physical interface.

*Boren Banner Series: Samantha Wall* is organized by Georgia Erger, Associate Curator. Generous support provided by the Frye Foundation and Frye Members.

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**Image:** Samantha Wall. *Becoming (No. 4)*, 2023. Conté crayon and ink on Dura-Lar. 40 × 40 in. Courtesy of the artist and Russo Lee Gallery. Photo: Stephen Slappe





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## ***Stephanie Syjuco: After/Images***

June 1–September 8, 2024

For nearly a decade, Stephanie Syjuco (born 1974, Manila, Philippines) has delved into museum and library collections to examine how a nation preserves and narrates its own histories. Syjuco rephotographs and reconstructs archival photographs, digitally manipulating them to reveal the instability of images and the violence of the colonial gaze. Focusing on the US occupation of the Philippines (1898–1946), the artist traces American colonization overseas as an extension of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, the nineteenth-century ideology that US settlers were destined to expand their territories across North America.

*Stephanie Syjuco: After/Images* centers on the camera as a technology of imperialism that records and creates racialized American histories. Across the exhibition's photographs, videos, and installations, Syjuco employs visual disruptions, annotations, and other cues of constructedness that counter the colonizer's power to shape the visual record without being seen. In *Block Out the Sun* (2021), the artist uses her own hands to cover images of Filipino subjects documented without their consent by early nineteenth-century ethnographic photographers, denying the Filipinos' continued subjugation. Other works incorporate photographic tools, like color calibration charts, to reveal authorial control in image making.

The large-scale installation *Dodge and Burn (Visible Storage)* (2019) takes the form of a multidimensional “still life” and contains hundreds of images and objects that reference American colonialist expansion in the Philippines during the early 1900s, as well as contemporary racial politics and protest movements. Many of the images are taken from stock photos, archival collections, and Google Image searches, while the objects include handsewn garments, props, MAGA hats, tiki torches, and artificial houseplants. Displayed on a 20 x 8 ft. platform, against chroma-key green (the color used in green screen technology) and gray Photoshop grid backdrops, the seemingly disparate components together evoke a stage set through visual references to postproduction techniques and image manipulation. Syjuco’s installation spotlights an intentionally constructed American narrative—one that projects a skewed history of its dominance and renders certain populations invisible.

A newly commissioned installation based on the artist’s research in the Seattle community incorporates photographs taken by Filipino Americans for Filipino Americans, showcasing their resilience in the wake of centuries-long colonization. Syjuco’s artistic interventions throughout *After/Images* explode the implied neutrality of national archives and unveil the narrative distortion embedded in the images—and the histories—they maintain.

## PUBLICATION

*After/Images* is accompanied by the first institutional monograph of Syjuco’s work, featuring full-color illustrations and essays by Aruna D’Souza, Georgia Erger, and Ekan Hou.

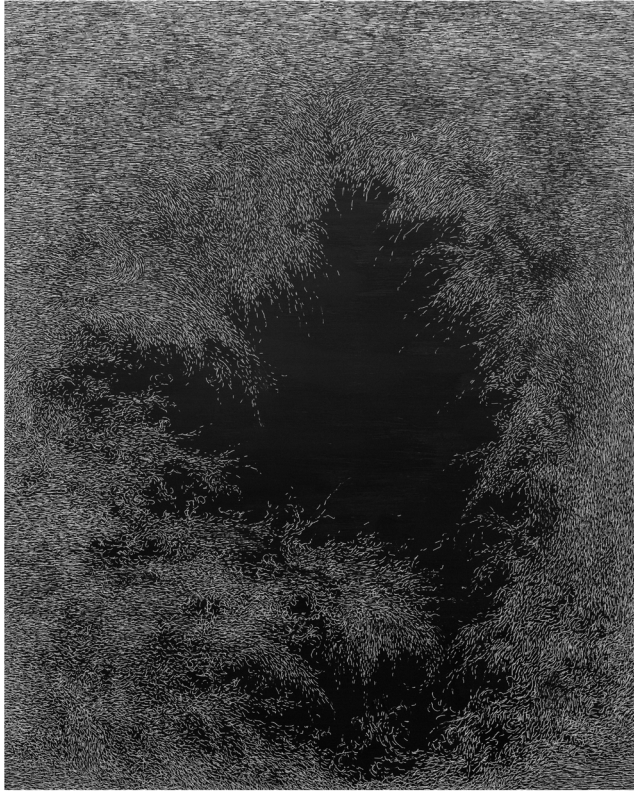
## ARTIST BIO

**Stephanie Syjuco** works in photography, sculpture, and installation, moving from handmade and craft-inspired mediums to digital editing and archive excavations. Recently, she has focused on how photography and image-based processes are implicated in the construction of racialized, exclusionary narratives of history and citizenship. Born in the Philippines, she is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and has exhibited widely, including at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. She is an associate professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and resides in Oakland.

*Stephanie Syjuco: After/Images* is organized by Georgia Erger, Associate Curator. Generous support provided by the Frye Foundation and Frye Members.

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**Image:** Stephanie Syjuco. *Dodge and Burn (Visible Storage)* (detail), 2019. Wooden platform, digital photos and printed vinyl on laser-cut wood, chroma-key fabric, printed backdrops, seamless paper, artificial plants, mixed media. 204 x 240 x 96 in. Courtesy of the artist; Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco; RYAN LEE Gallery, New York; and Silverlens Gallery, Manila, Philippines. Installation view, *Stephanie Syjuco: Rogue States*, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, September 6–December 29, 2019. Photo: Stephanie Syjuco



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## **Mary Ann Peters: *the edge becomes the center***

June 15, 2024–September 15, 2024

Seattle artist Mary Ann Peters (born 1949, Beaumont, Texas) has attended to overlooked narratives for almost forty years, interpreting her research through mediums including painting, sculpture, and installation. Peters unearths hidden diasporic histories, often through travel, and contextualizes them within her experiences of the contemporary Middle East as a second-generation Lebanese American. *The edge becomes the center* brings together the artist's series *this trembling turf* for the first time and presents it alongside a new installation—works that together surface the ways forgotten and repressed pasts shape present experience.

*This trembling turf* features ten abstract drawings, including one from the Frye's collection, which the artist crafts by applying thin strokes of white ink to black clayboard. The series interprets natural habitats where activity occurs beneath the surface, with rhythmic patterns referencing sound waves used by archaeologists to uncover buried traces of civilization. These intricate drawings imagine the missing records of populations and cultures physically covered over, reminding us that forgotten histories could be buried below us, lost within our collective memory.

The exhibition's new site-specific installation continues the artist's ongoing *impossible monuments* series, works of disparate materials and forms that memorialize disregarded details of socio-political events. Peters writes, "I define an impossible monument as something that deserves reverence but by virtue of its incidental nature would never be elevated to the status of a monument." Together, these bodies of work ask viewers to consider which narratives are written into history and which are erased.

"When I began my series *this trembling turf*, I did not imagine the visual conversation that would emerge between the pieces," Peters explains. "I made each one with singular purpose. But having the series be seen as a whole was always in the background of my hopes for this work. That the Frye is including a new *impossible monument* in my exhibition doubles the gift of this opportunity. It brings together aspects of my studio practice that compliment my skills, my interests, and my ethics. These works are exactly what I want to share for my first solo museum show."

## ARTIST BIO

**Mary Ann Peters** is a second-generation Arab American multimedia artist based in Seattle. Her work acts as a social and conceptual response to issues and histories in the Middle East. Through a distant but personal filter, she seeks to understand, interpret, and highlight dismissed or undermined diasporic narratives. Her work is research driven and employs painting, drawing, sculpture, and installation. She has been a practicing artist and an artist-activist for four decades. Her awards include a McLaughlin Foundation Fellowship at Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA (2022), an Artist Trust Visual Art Fellowship (2021), the Camargo Fellowship in Cassis, France (2017), the Beirut Art Residency, Lebanon (2016), the Stranger Genius Award in Visual Art (2015), an Art Matters Foundation Research Grant (2013), and a MacDowell Colony Pollock/Krasner Fellowship (2011). She is a current board member of the performance venue On the Boards and former board member and president of NCFE (National Campaign for Freedom of Expression), a decade-long commitment focused on First Amendment rights for artists.

*Mary Ann Peters: the edge becomes the center* is organized by Alexis L. Silva, Curatorial Assistant. Generous support provided by the Frye Foundation and Frye Members.

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**Image:** Mary Ann Peters. *this trembling turf (the hollow)*, 2021. White ink on black clayboard. 60 x 48 in. Collection of the Seattle Convention Center. Image courtesy of James Harris Gallery. Photo: Rafael Soldi





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## ***Twilight Child:* Antonia Kuo and Martin Wong**

June 15–September 15, 2024

A study in personal and artistic resonance, *Twilight Child* brings together the work of Antonia Kuo (born 1987, New York) and Martin Wong (born 1946, Portland, Oregon; died 1999, San Francisco)—two queer diasporic Chinese artists born more than forty years apart. Developed in close collaboration with Kuo, the exhibition features Wong’s rarely exhibited biomorphic clay sculptures from the 1960s and 70s, alongside selected paintings and archival materials from across his career. Kuo contributes recent photochemical paintings—including new works created in response to Wong’s poetry—and sculptural objects made at her family’s Seattle-area industrial metal casting company.

“I am thrilled and deeply humbled by this dialogue between Martin and my work, as he is a cherished artist from whose freewheeling, expansive and insightful perspective I continually receive inspiration,” writes Kuo. “Within his poetic fantasies persists a groundedness that centers around what it means to be human—in relation to his communities and daily realities, scaled all the way up to forces of nature and the cosmological—like the lone, small figures embedded in the immensity of a Chinese landscape painting. It has been my distinct pleasure to work so intimately in formulating the exhibition.”

Both artists' works combine the influences of their Chinese heritage, such as traditional *shanshui* landscape painting, with their contemporary American realities and elements of fantasy. They each incorporate photography in unconventional ways, to stylistically divergent but conceptually related ends. Wong taped together snapshots to compose his claustrophobic trompe l'oeil New York nightscapes of the 1980s, adding astrological constellations and ASL fingerspelling icons to create composite images of multiple signification systems. Kuo likewise achieves a densely patterned, shallow depth of field by superimposing photographs, masking, and painting gesturally with reactive chemicals on light-sensitive paper. Through their respective techniques, the artists underscore processes of translation and confound "straight" legibility.

The layering and hybridity present in the work of each artist suggests the pluralism of multicultural experience, as well as a desire to integrate dualities like chaos and control. For Kuo, it comes from a simultaneous interest in and ambivalence toward expressing cultural identity, "a confusion that can be productive to mine, an element of self that is both familiar and distant."

Evoking liminality or blurred identity boundaries as well as (artistic) lineage, the exhibition borrows its title from Wong's 1966 poem, which reads: "Mystic savage twilight child / vision ravaged running wild / pounding echoes down the rainslick night / resounding through the moulten light." In 1970, the artist inscribed the poem on a clay tablet that will be included in the exhibition.

The presentation continues an informal series of intergenerational and "artists' artists" pairings mounted at the Frye over the last several years. *Dress Codes: Ellen Lesperance and Diane Simpson* (September 21, 2019–January 5, 2020) brought Lesperance's and Simpson's work into conversation for the first time, highlighting their body- and design-adjacent use of the grid as a feminist alternative to patriarchal representational traditions of painting and sculpture. The group exhibition *Door to the Atmosphere* (October 29, 2022–January 15, 2023) was co-organized by artist Srijon Chowdhury in thematic resonance with his solo presentation at the Frye. *Marsden Hartley: An American Nature* (February 11–May 21, 2023), a focused presentation centered on two works from the Frye's collection, was on view simultaneously with *Flying Woman: The Paintings of Katherine Bradford* (February 4–May 14, 2023) to spotlight Hartley's impact on Bradford's artistic development. Such pairings are animated by the museum's commitment to revisit and refresh the scholarly record and ongoing resonance of our own collection.

## PUBLICATION

*Twilight Child* is accompanied by a free publication featuring a curatorial essay by Amanda Donnan.

## ARTIST BIOS

**Antonia Kuo** lives and works in New York. She received an MFA from Yale University in 2018, a BFA from School of Fine Arts Boston and Tufts University in 2009, and a one-year certificate from the School of the International Center of Photography in 2013. Her work has been exhibited at Chapter, New York (2023); Chart, New York (2022); Each Modern, Taipei (2022); MAMOTH, London (2022); Make Room, Los Angeles (2021); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2020); Rubber Factory, New York (2018); and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York



(2016). She has been an artist-in-residence at Mass MoCA (2018), Vermont Studio Center (2016), and the Banff Centre (2015) and was a MacDowell Colony Fellow (2014), among others. Kuo's work is included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and Centre Pompidou, Paris.

**Martin Wong** was born in his mother's hometown of Portland, OR, and grew up in San Francisco. He lived in Eureka, CA, between 1964 and 1978 and completed his undergraduate studies in ceramics at Humboldt State University in 1968. Wong's psychedelic paintings, sculptures, and calligraphy from this period include eclectic imagery drawn from Eastern mythologies, natural history, pop culture, and local scenes. Calling himself the "Human Instamatic," he made a living as a sidewalk portraitist selling drawings for five dollars each. Wong maintained an artistic presence in San Francisco through the outdoor exhibitions of the San Francisco Arts Festival and creating stage sets and props for the "acid drag" performance troupes The Cockettes and Angels of Light.

In 1978, Wong moved to New York City. There he became associated with the cultural developments of the Lower East Side, cultivating an eccentric urban cowboy style and identity as "El Chino Latino" in the Puerto Rican enclave of Losaida. The artist's unique representational imagery—often rendered in a minutely detailed yet cartoony trompe l'oeil—encompassed the urban environment, the history and stereotypes of Chinatown, and homoerotic fantasies of firemen and prison inmates. His iconic paintings of crumbling tenement buildings romanced the harsh realities of an impoverished neighborhood neglected by city authorities, opening spaces of beauty and inclusion amidst derelict brick edifices, heaps of debris, and burned-out cars. Wong included astrological and ASL fingerspelling iconography in much of his work, likening these to the esoteric inscriptions in ancient Chinese painting.

In New York, Wong was also known as a wide-ranging collector, especially of the work of graffiti art pioneers. He exhibited for two decades at notable downtown galleries including EXIT ART, Semaphore, and P·P·O·W, among others, and had a solo exhibition at the New Museum during his lifetime. Wong returned to San Francisco in the final five years of his life and painted up to the day of his death from complications related to AIDS. His work is represented in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. His work has been the subject of two traveling retrospectives: *Human Instamatic*, organized by the Bronx Museum of the Arts in 2015, and *Malicious Mischief*, organized by Museo Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid, and KW Institute of Contemporary Art, Berlin, in 2022.

*Twilight Child: Antonia Kuo and Martin Wong* is organized by Amanda Donnan, Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions. Generous support provided by the Frye Foundation and Frye Members.

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**Images (L-R):** Martin Wong. *Untitled (MW Was Here January 23 1970)*, 1970. Stoneware. 16 x 7 x 12 in. Courtesy of the Martin Wong Foundation and P·P·O·W, New York; Antonia Kuo. *Osiris*, 2023. Cast bronze, ceramic. 16 1/2 x 11 1/2 x 6 3/4 in. Courtesy of the artist and Chapter NY, New York

## About the Frye Art Museum

Founded in 1952, the Frye is Seattle's only free art museum, bringing together art and new ideas within a stunning Olson Sundberg Kundig-designed building in historic First Hill. A founding collection of turn-of-the-century oil paintings is bolstered by a wide range of modern and contemporary art holdings, reflecting our region's evolving identity and a commitment to exploring the art of our time. Learn more at [fryemuseum.org](http://fryemuseum.org).

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