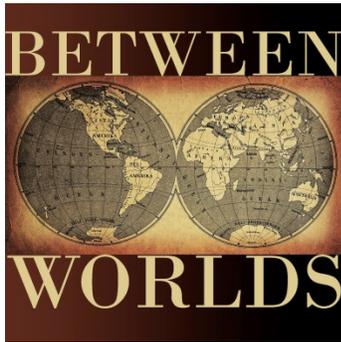


Between Worlds

July 9 – August 13, 2016

*Opening reception:
Saturday, July 9, 7-9pm*



Participating Artists:

Carlo Abruzzese

Nanci Amaka

Jason Bayani

Natalya Burd

Carlos Cartagena

Rodney Ewing

Michal Gavish

Taraneh Hemami

Golbanou Moghaddas

Maja Ruznic

Michal Wisniowski

Wanxin Zhang

Co-curated by:

Michael Yochum, Arc Gallery

Jack Fischer, Jack Fischer Gallery

Catalog essay by:

Bean Gilsdorf

Between Worlds started with a desire to curate an exhibition that responded to the Syrian refugee crisis. The exhibition has evolved and broadened to encompass an examination of the process of uprooting and transplantation in a human context. All of the artists selected have been affected directly or indirectly by displacement.

Here in the San Francisco Bay Area our community, and particularly our artist community, has been enriched by cultural diversity. But those who arrive seeking a home, come to an uncomfortable realization that they are, in fact, not home, but between worlds. They look back and long for their homeland, but it is a place that no longer exists or would not welcome them back. Their adopted home, a place to start anew, makes them feel like outsiders, their knowledge, skills and education devalued. They find themselves longing for a place that may not exist. Safe haven is not the same as home. And, in today's world, a place of refuge is often neither safe nor welcoming.

This exhibition shares the collective experience of artists with San Francisco Bay Area ties, who reside in this space, *Between Worlds*



Carlo Abruzzese's

beautifully, luminescent pieces are based on transformations of data exploring diaspora. His work integrates the disparate worlds of fine art and quantitative information, creating images that encourage us to re-interpret the world around us. He received his MArch from Harvard University and his B.A. from the UC Berkeley. His art has been recently exhibited at the David Brower Center in Berkeley and at the de Young Museum and Arc Gallery in San Francisco.

Michal Gavish's

ghostly figurative portraits on fabric depict her family from Hungary, many of whom perished in the Holocaust. During an artist residency in Budapest in 2011, she gathered the photo references. Embroidering the images with an emblem of Diaspora DNA, she integrates the work with her science background. Michal has an MFA from SFAI and has recently exhibited her work at the Jewish Museum of Hungary (Budapest), Zadik Gallery (Tel Aviv), Stanford University (Palo Alto), Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Arc Gallery and Sandra Lee Gallery (San Francisco).

Golbanou Moghaddas

grew up in the north of Iran by the Caspian Sea. After the 1979 Revolution, many left the country. Her parents chose to stay, although they, like many other parents, encouraged their children to leave and study abroad. Since her departure she's found the chasm between home and where she finds herself to be immensely distant. Strongly driven by Persian poetry and Existential philosophy, her autobiographical etchings are a contemplative practice in a search for a state of stillness. Through her visual narratives, she connects the past to the unsettling present and creates ideals of an invulnerable place to land. The work for this exhibition is inspired by an old Persian expression which says, a dove with two nests always remains unfed.

Natalya Burd

left Russia in 1994. The country was unstable after the fall of the Soviet Union. As she said to me, in Russia at that time she was the Jew; while, ironically now, here in the U.S. she is the Russian. Natalya works on paper with ink and iridescent paint. The works are, at first glance, peaceful. They remind one of Japanese kakemono, something you might find in a Zen temple calming your spirit; that is, until you realize the figures are often scenes from civil wars. She will be showing two works from her series: Times. Natalya earned her MFA in Painting from the University of Washington, Seattle and her BFA from Oregon State University. Since then, she has exhibited throughout the Bay Area with exhibitions at Arc Gallery, Jack Fischer Gallery (which represents her), SJICA and Berkeley Art Center amongst others.

Rodney Ewing

will be showing "Portals", four doors representing African Americans losing, searching, finding, and continued fight for a home as well as "Left Handed Magic", an editioned work based on the life and the escape of Henry "Box" Brown from slavery. Within the piece itself is a narrative that combines a math problem (asking students to figure out the dimensions of his crate) with questions regarding his state of mind and the environment he was fleeing. With an MFA and BFA in printmaking, Rodney has exhibited throughout the Bay Area most recently at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Berkeley Art Center, Jack Fischer Gallery, Nancy Toomey Gallery, Kala Institute and Southern Exposure as well as nationally at The Drawing Center in New York and Art Basel Miami with Yeelen Gallery.



Maja Ruznic

was born in Bosnia and came to the United States as a refugee in 1995. Her work explores trauma and inherited memory. In this new body of work, Ruznic returns to large-scale oil painting after five years of working solely with water-based media. She conceives of the landscape as a body, just as she does the figures that it spontaneously generates. Relying on color, rather than line, Ruznic creates a community of psychopomps - intermediary figures who transport dying souls from this world to the next. Soothers of discomfort, these exhausted bodies represent inter-generational trauma and how it is manifested in the flesh. A fear of contagion floats somewhere between the figures, perhaps subtly beneath fields of color, and is responsible somehow for their terrible mistakes and bad behavior. Ruznic uses color to speak about this fear and allows gesture to be the narrative. While she resides in LA, Maja earned her MFA at CCA and her BFA at UC Berkeley. She has had recent solo shows at Arc Gallery and Jack Fischer Gallery (San Francisco), Galerie d'YS(Brussels), Conduit Gallery (Dallas, and Trailer Park Projects (Puerto Rico). She is represented by Jack Fischer Gallery.

Nanci Amaka's

work explores trauma, identity, memory and the liminal spaces between experience and language. Born in Nigeria, she came to the United States also as a refugee at age 11. She will unveil a new abstract sculptural installation linking to the sound elements that are typically used in her work with a QR code. This provocative work creates the interesting effect of the work being both physically present but also simultaneously elsewhere. In addition to the sculpture, she will be showing some related graphic works. Nanci received a BA in Visual Critical Studies from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and an MFA from California College of the Arts.

Carlos Cartagena

came from El Salvador in 1989. The "formative years of his youth were in the 1980's, when his country was beginning to bleed incurably from the wounds of war. Carlos will be creating original work for the exhibition. "Estatuas de Sal" will be part of a continuing "work in progress" called "Silhouettes". In this series, human figures are covered with original stories of migrant people: photos, documents, poems and original letters or anything that reflects the migration factor. The new work will be two vertical framed figurative pieces on canvas. These two pieces will have a slightly opaque salt coating - a reference to the Biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah, where those who looked back turned into pillars of salt. In addition to having been selected to be part of the DeYoung Museum Artist-in-Residence, Carlos' work has been exhibited with well-known artists such as Francisco Toledo, Claudia Bernardi, Rupert Garcia, Enrique Chagoya, and Nathan Oliveira and he has shown internationally in El Salvador, México, Japan, Cuba, Hawaii and various cities in the United States.

Taraneh Hemami

was born and raised in Tehran. Her multi-disciplinary work explores themes of displacement, preservation and representation. Presenting her newest installation "Absence", this work is a meditation on the in-between spaces of belonging with a process of cutting bodies - individually or in groups - out of collected personal photographs; "Absence" traces transient landscapes of memory in multi-layered fragments of intimate or public place: a bed, a classroom, a backyard, a bridge, a brick road, a wall, the sea. While Taraneh has exhibited her work internationally in UAE, Iran, UK, Serbia, Lebanon, Brussels amongst other countries, she is also very well recognized in the Bay Area with exhibitions at The Lab, SFAC, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Kala Institute, SFAI's Walter McBean Gallery, The Luggage Store and Southern Exposure.



Wanxin Zhang

started the "Gas Mask" series a few years ago. Every time he would go back to China to visit relatives, his mother would ask him to bring high quality masks made in America to protect against the immense pollution. The Chinese people are suffering from the consequences of a country-wide push to global economic success in just decades. This mindset derived from the end of the Cultural Revolution, when there was no talk of values or morals as a country, destroying culture while focusing on growth and wealth. The real damage to China right now isn't the just to the air, but to the mindsets of the people. And upon further reflection, it's not just China. This kind of thinking is present all over the world, across religious and political landscapes. He asks himself: how long do I have to wear the mask for. Wanxin graduated in 1985 from the Sculpture program at the LuXun Academy of Fine Art and since his relocation to California in 1992 has received several grants and awards including the Joan Mitchell Painter and Sculptor Grant in 2004 and the Virginia A. Groot Foundation Grant in 2006. In 2010, the exhibition, "Wanxin Zhang - A Ten Year Survey" curated by Peter Held, opened at Arizona State University Art Museum, and later travelled to Idaho, Florida, Washington, Montana, and California. Zhang was the subject of a solo exhibition featured at the Fresno Art Museum in California in 2007 and the Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art in Michigan in 2008. Zhang exhibited in the 22nd UBC Sculpture Biennial in Japan in 2007, the Taipei Ceramics Biennial in Taiwan in 2008, and the Da Tong City 2nd International Sculpture Biennial in China in 2013. His work is included in the book "Confrontational Ceramics" by Judith Schwartz and has been reviewed in publications such as Art in America, Sculpture, and American Ceramics. He is represented by Catharine Clark Gallery, where he had a solo exhibition in 2015.

Michal Wisniowski

is a Polish-born artist whose formative years were divided between communist Poland, refugee camps in Denmark, and post-unification Germany. The intersections of economic and political structures are integral to Wisniowski's practice. He will be creating original paintings for this exhibition. The paintings will be inspired by, though not literal copies of, the propaganda posters that were common in Poland as the Soviet Union was crumbling and the government was imposing martial law in an attempt to destroy the Solidarity civil resistance movement. With an MFA from SFIAI, Wisniowski's work has been exhibited at Arc Gallery, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Studio 110 Projects, Aggregate Space, Root Division and SFIAI's Diego Rivera Gallery.

Jason Bayani

is a Filipino-American spoken-word performance artist and poet whose work explores the aspects of "stranger in a strange land" inherent in the Asian Pacific American experience. He is a graduate of Saint Mary's MFA program in Creative Writing. He is a Kundiman fellow and a veteran of the National Poetry Slam scene whose work has been published in Fourteen Hills, Muzzle Magazine, Mascara Review, the National Poetry Slam anthology, Rattapallax, Write Bloody's classroom anthology-- Learn Then Burn, and other publications. As a member of 7 National Poetry Slam teams, he's been a National Poetry Slam finalist and represented Oakland at the International World Poetry Slam. He is also one of the founding members of the Filipino American Spoken Word troupe, Proletariat Bronze, and has been an organizer for the Asian and Pacific Islander Poetry and Spoken Word Summit. His first book, "Amulet" was published in 2013 through Write Bloody Press and has garnered acclaim in literary magazines such as Zyzzyva and Glint.

Media inquiries, please contact Beth Waldman: beth@waldmanarts.com.

High resolution images and/or catalog available upon request.