

Inflorescence

Anela Ming-Yue Oh - 胡明月

West Bay View Foundation Fellowship 2021

DIEU /
DONNE /

Anela Ming-Yue Oh is a multidisciplinary artist currently based in Brooklyn, NY. Oh draws on her Malaysian-Chinese heritage in her work, employing imagery of the natural world as a means towards understanding her personal and cultural history, as an exploration of her present, and as insight into who she may become. Environmental processes of adaptation, transformation, disintegration, and reformation inform Oh's practice on macrocosmic and intimate scales. Her own experiences of moving around as a child echo her ancestral histories of displacement, connecting past and present in stories of migration, destruction, and reconstruction. Oh's work mines these personal and historical narratives, grounding ancestral and present traumas into cultural markers.



Throughout her practice, Oh utilizes the visual patterns of Malaysian Batik, an art form traditionally created on fabric using a wax-resistant dye. In the Dieu Donn e wet studio, Oh reinterpreted this important cultural technique into handmade paper, translating the floral motifs and painstaking production process from cloth to pulp. Using stencil, blowout, and embedded material, Oh constructs intricately layered floral forms in paper. The paper medium allows Oh to examine patterns of de- and re-construction; pulp dissolved in water can be recreated and reformed, built into something seemingly fragile but surprisingly strong. The material undergoes a process of transformation, mirroring Oh's personal evolution.



In her *Inflorescence* series, Oh incorporates both sides of her mixed race heritage for the first time. Titled after the cluster of flowers on the head of a plant, *Inflorescence* evokes a time of growth and self realization that is rooted in branching histories. Juxtaposing batik florals with stenciled imagery of okra plants, Oh draws strength from the environmental icons of her dual ancestry. In bringing together her multiple heritages, Oh considers her cultural history as a spiritual resource that provides a sense of strength in the present, rather than acting as a remnant of spent labor and love.

*In my artworks, I utilize imagery from my Malaysian-Chinese cultural heritage to draw the line between where I come from and who I will become. As someone who comes from a history of displacement, these cultural markers give me a sense of place and situate me where I am: home. The *Inflorescence* series is the first to incorporate imagery from both sides of my mixed race heritage. These works use Malaysian batik-inspired blowout forms but also include okra plants stenciled in pulp paint to honor my maternal grandmother and great-grandmother who were sharecroppers in South Carolina. Okra is one of the crops they would grow for themselves in their garden while laboring in the fields on others farms. The labor and love they put into nurturing food for others is a burden I cannot imagine. I come from the strongest of women, these works are a reminder to myself that there are reservoirs of strength I can draw upon from those who have passed away as I try and imagine and construct new futures. Those we have lost: their labor, and their love are resources that are always available to us as we navigate this world.*

-Anela Ming-Yue Oh

Inflorescence: Anela Ming-Yue Oh is curated by Eliana Blechman.

Top Image: Anela Ming-Yue Oh, *Inflorescence (For Granny KenKen)*, 2022, Overbeaten Abaca, Linen Pulp Paint, Cotton Blow-outs, Sewing Thread, 31" x 32"; Bottom Image: Anela Ming-Yue Oh, *Untitled* (detail), 2022



Images: Anela Ming Yue-Oh working in the Dieu Donn  studio on a 40 x 60", 3-D doodled piece on Abaca.

About the Artist

Anela Ming-Yue Oh is a multidisciplinary artist that integrates papermaking, ceramics, and fiber together to build new worlds. Her work aims to inspire a sense of hope and proposes visions of a future that includes marginalized voices by choosing to take a joyful and playful approach while discussing immigrant histories. She holds a BFA from School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts and has been an Artist in Residence at Sonoma Ceramics, and a Teaching Artist-in-Residence at the Oxbow School. Currently she is the West Bay View Fellow at Dieu Donn .

About the Curator

Eliana Blechman is a curator and arts worker based in New York. She is the inaugural Archive & Collection Fellow at Dieu Donn . Previously, she has held curatorial positions at Time Equities, Inc. Art-in-Buildings and AC Institute. Blechman is an MA Candidate in Art History at Hunter College, where she also received an Advanced Certificate in Curatorial Studies, and she received her BA as a double major in Art History and History from New York University.

About Dieu Donn 

Dieu Donn  is the leading cultural institution dedicated to serving established and emerging artists through the collaborative creation of contemporary art using the process of hand papermaking.

About the West Bay View Foundation Fellowship

Established in 2018, the West Bay View Fellowship provides support for post-graduate artists with a commitment to paper as a medium. For more information or to learn how to apply, visit www.dieudonne.org

Support

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