

# A.I.R.

## ***CURRENTS: Identity Politics***

January 7 - February 6, 2022

Opening reception: Friday, January 7 from 12-6 PM (by appointment)



Yvonne Osei, *EXTENSIONS*, 2018, video still.

GALLERY II & III

Ohan Breiding, Kiani Ferris, Yalda Foroughmand Arabi, Ranee Henderson, KC Crow Maddux, Yvonne Osei, Denisse Griselda Reyes, Morgan Thomas Shankweiler, Julia Kim Smith, Asia Stewart, Angelica Trimble-Yanu, Stephanie J. Woods

Curated by Christian Camacho-Light and Roxana Fabius

A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to present the 7th edition of *CURRENTS*, a biennial open call exhibition series in which artists respond to current topics. Curated by A.I.R. Executive Director Roxana Fabius and Director of Exhibitions and Fellowship Christian Camacho-Light, the 2022 iteration of the series addresses the topic of identity politics.

Coinciding with the 45th anniversary of the Combahee River Collective Statement, this exhibition looks to the origins of identity politics in order to consider the concept's continued relevance and contemporary manifestations. In their 1977 statement—one of the most significant texts of the twentieth century and a pillar of Black feminist theory and practice—the Combahee River Collective introduced identity politics as a cogent political analysis that emphasizes personal experience and multi-focal coalition building as wellsprings of revolutionary action. For the Combahee River Collective, identity politics allowed for the recognition that all forms of oppression are interconnected and thus cannot be fought in isolation. While importantly informed by *who you are*, identity politics poses the more essential question of what you might *do with others*.

Nearly half a century later, the value of identity politics is widely debated in the public sphere, with mainstream and alternative media alike wading into a perceived fissure in contemporary political discourse: that between so-called “identity politics of division” on the one hand and class-based struggle on the other. On both the left and right, this has resulted in a muddying of the terms at play, giving the impression that contemporary politics is either/or, a zero-sum game.

*CURRENTS: Identity Politics* invited artists to consider the concept in its original, radical intention. The exhibition therefore looks to the agency to be harnessed in unique lived and embodied experience, as well as in the co-conspirators with which our intersectional identities put us in relation and potential collective action. Through a broad array of media—including painting, sculpture, installation, video, and performance—the twelve artists included in the exhibition represent the range and rigor with which contemporary visual artists are addressing timely issues of identity, coalition building, and intersectional analysis and action. Their works attend to race, gender, class, and access from nuanced and diverse perspectives.

**Christian Camacho-Light** is a curator and writer based in New York. Their curatorial research deals with matters of difference and identity, recognition and resistance, and the relationship between aesthetic and social representation. They've organized exhibitions and public programs at Kate Werble Gallery, New York, NY; A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space, New York, NY; Abrons Arts Center, New York, NY; The Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts, Ramapo College, Mahwah, NJ; Knockdown Center, Queens, NY; The International Studio & Curatorial Program, Brooklyn, NY; and the Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY. Camacho-Light is currently the Director of Exhibitions and Fellowship at A.I.R. Gallery and was formerly the Associate Director of Kate Werble Gallery (2017-2020) and AIRspace Curator-in-Residence at Abrons Arts Center (2017-2019). They hold an MA in Curatorial Studies from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College and a BA in Art History from Vassar College.

**Roxana Fabius Rozenbaum** is a Uruguayan curator and arts administrator. She currently lives and works in New York City and serves as Executive Director at A.I.R. Gallery. During her tenure at A.I.R. she has organized programs and exhibitions with Gordon Hall, Elizabeth Povinelli, Jack Halberstam, Che Gosset, Regina José Galindo, Lex Brown, Kazuko, Howardena Pindell, and many others. She has also organized programs and exhibitions at the Judd Foundation, NYC, The Park Avenue Armory, NYC, The Hessel Museum, New York, Caixa Forum, Barcelona, Zona Maco, Mexico D.F., Art Port, Tel Aviv, Centro Cultural de España, Montevideo, and Museo Zorrilla, Montevideo. Her research is focused on the intersection of aesthetics, art, design, technology, and feminist theories.

**Ohan Breiding** works with drawing, photography, video and installation to archive queer narratives and underrepresented voices. Through an interdisciplinary approach and varying forms of collaboration, Ohan Breiding depicts the importance of kinship and intergenerational exchange via autobiography, historical events, and the landscape as witness. They received their MFA from CalArts and have exhibited widely throughout the US, Europe and the Middle East. They have received numerous awards including the DAAD, the Rema Hort Mann Emerging Artist Award, the Powers Fund Grant and the SIFF Award for the film made with Shoghig Halajian and the participation of Silvia Federici (author of Caliban and the Witch), *The Rebel Body*. They are a 2021 TBA21 Ocean Fellow and are represented by Ochi Projects in Los Angeles. Their work has been written about in *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Hyperallergic* and *Whitewall*.

**Kiani Ferris** is an artist and ceramicist based in Brooklyn, New York. She earned her BFA at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in 2020 and studied at Kyoto Seika University in 2018. As a third-generation Japanese American, her work explores the complexities of cultural estrangement while simultaneously celebrating the joys of its perseverance. She acknowledges the shifting distance and proximity of living and deceased spirits while forming connections with them, honoring their histories within present forms. Ferris' work has been exhibited throughout New York and Japan.

**Yalda Foroughmand Arabi** (b. Tehran, Iran) received her BFA in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design and currently works as an artist and art educator based in Brooklyn. Yalda's diaristic work is a visual representation of her experiences and inner world which is deeply rooted in her identity as it relates to culture, history, family, and life as a first generation immigrant. Yalda's work has shown in a number of group exhibitions, most recently at Paradise Palase where she is currently is a part of Oasis studios.

**Ranee Henderson** is a multi-disciplinary artist. She graduated from both Emily Carr University of Art and Design (2010-Fine Art), and Art Center College of Design (2015-Illustration/Fine Art). She completed her MFA at Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College (2018/2019). Most recently, she was a participant at the Golden Residency (2020) and at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2019). She has built up a diverse body of work, which has been exhibited in Canada and the United States. Henderson currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

**KC Crow Maddux** is a Brooklyn based, trans artist whose work is intentionally difficult to categorize. Their pieces employ photography, painting, and sculptural processes together; creating a "trans" format. They are interested in the friction between the specific embodied self and the abstract, taxonomic language we often use. Maddux has been awarded residencies at Yaddo, the Fire Island Artist Residency, Wassaic Project, and the Vermont Studio Center. Their work has appeared and been written about in *ArtForum*, *Forbes*, *Palimpsests*, the *Yale Graduate School Literary and Arts Journal*, *New Flesh*, *Original Plumbing*, *Humble Arts Foundation Online*, *Filthy Dreams*, and *Hyperallergic* (sometimes as Kacy Maddux). They have recently shown at 1969 Gallery, Field Projects, Spring/Break, Haul, and Vox Populi. In 2020, their work was in the two-person inaugural exhibition by the Compton Trans Cultural District in San Francisco. Their work is included in the upcoming exhibition "Not me, Not that, Not nothing either" at the Leslie Lohman GLBT Museum in NYC.

**Yvonne Osei** is a German-born Ghanaian multidisciplinary artist and arts advocate living and working in St. Louis, MO. Her intercontinental creative practice explores themes of beauty, race, the politics of clothing and residual implications of colonialism in post-colonial West Africa and Western cultures. Osei received her M.F.A. from Washington University in St. Louis. She has exhibited and performed in institutions, including Laumeier Sculpture Park, MO; Everson Museum of Art, NY; Contemporary Arts Center, OH; Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, MO; Sterling College, KS; Lambert International Airport, MO among others. She currently serves as the Vice President of Surface Design Association.

Straddling the lines of assimilation, refuge, and self-preservation, **Denisse Griselda Reyes's** current work interrogates the boundaries of representation. Beginning with a psychological dig, the initial site being their own Identity, Denisse's autofictional practice is dedicated to archiving marginalized histories poised between fiction and reality. The dramatic complexities of personal experience and transhistorical trauma manifests as hyperbolic recreations in videos, films, poems, paintings, and performances as their alter-ego, Griselda. They received a Visual Arts MFA in New Genres from Columbia University in 2021 and a BA in Art History from Wesleyan University in 2015. They are currently working in Brooklyn, NY.

**Morgan Thomas Shankweiler** splits her studio time between the Philadelphia suburbs and the coast of Maine. She graduated with sociology and studio art majors from Williams College (Massachusetts) and studied Mughal miniature painting with Ajay Sharma in Jaipur, India. Her background in sociology informs her work, which is a study in time, memory, community, chance and the commonalities of human experience. Shankweiler's award-winning work has been featured in the 2020 online archive of AI39, online through MuralArts Philadelphia and ArtsBenicia, and has been shown in galleries in Boston, New York, New Jersey, Indianapolis and Philadelphia. Her current practice focuses on the meditative and aleatoric creation of intricate rope and knot paintings and drawings. These works examine relationships, social systems and community networks through metaphorical still-life and mathematical abstraction.

**Julia Kim Smith** is a multidisciplinary artist whose work addresses issues of racism, sexism, misrepresentation, and underrepresentation through traditional and new media. She is interested in the pervasive influence of the internet and its tools on society and uses both to inform her practice and to question what constitutes truth—and whose truth. Her films have received premieres at Slamdance Film Festival, Center For Asian American Media CAAMFest, San Francisco Documentary Film Festival, Brooklyn Film Festival, and Joe's Pub.

**Asia Stewart** is a Brooklyn-based performance artist whose conceptual work centers the body as a living archive. After receiving degrees in the social sciences from Cambridge and Harvard University, she has sought ways to embody abstract sociological theories and transform the language specific to studies of race, gender, sexuality, and diaspora into materials that can be felt and worn on the body. As a National YoungArts Winner in Musical Theatre and a former National Arts Policy Roundtable Fellow with Americans for the Arts, Stewart uses her past experiences on stage to inject her work with a heightened sense of theatricality.

**Angelica Trimble-Yanu**, raised in Oakland, California is an enrolled member of the Oglála Lakhóta Nation from Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Angelica has received a Bachelors of General Fine Arts at the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon with a focus in printmaking and sculpture. She currently lives and works in Oakland, California. Her work has been recognized nationally at the De Young Museum and is in the permanent collection of the Five Oaks Museum, Lakota Dream Museum, SGC International Archives, Portland Community College, and the Zuckerman Museum. Angelica has previously shown with Marin Museum of Contemporary Art, Grayloft, Shoh, Mata, BlackFish, Envelope, and Blanc Space galleries. She is a two-time recipient of the Artist in Residence Program at Kala Art Institute and has received two awards in writing and printmaking from the Pacific Northwest College of Art. Angelica has participated in public artist talks with the De Young Museum and Oregon State University at the Eena Haw Native American Longhouse. Her work has been published locally and internationally by Divide Magazine, Howl Magazine, The Racket San Francisco, PBS News Hour, SF Bay View, Together Magazine, and Oregon Artswatch.

**Stephanie J. Woods** is a multimedia artist from Charlotte, NC, currently based in Albuquerque, NM. Woods' is the recipient of several residencies and fellowships, including Black Rock Senegal, the Fine Arts Work Center fellowship, ACRE Residency, the McColl Center for Art + Innovation, and Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists Residency. Her work is featured in the permanent collection at the Virginia Museum of Fine Art, and she has exhibited her work at Smack Mellon, and Tiger Strikes Asteroid, NY. Additionally, her work has been featured in BOMB Magazine, Art Papers, Burnaway, and the Boston Art Review.

A.I.R. Gallery is wheelchair accessible via ramp. There are accessible toilets in the venue. There is comfortable seating with backs. Free tap water is available. The venue is nearest to the F train at York St (0.2 miles) and the A train at High St (0.5 miles). The nearest wheelchair accessible trains is the B, Q, R at Dekalb Av (1.1 miles) and the 2, 3 at Borough Hall (0.8 miles). The roads immediately surrounding the gallery are cobblestone. The nearest accessible parking garage (for an hourly fee) is two blocks away at 100 Jay St. No ID necessary for entry. Please contact [info@airgallery.org](mailto:info@airgallery.org) for more information.



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