

MILLS COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

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In Mills College Art Museum's *Art+Process+Ideas*, Liat Berdugo, Heesoo Kwon, and Ranu Mukherjee harness the power of new technologies and performance



(L) Ranu Mukherjee, (R top) Liat Berdugo, (R bottom) Heesoo Kwon

ART+PROCESS+IDEAS: LIAT BERDUGO, HEESOO KWON, RANU MUKHERJEE SEPTEMBER 19 – DECEMBER 3, 2023

Opening Reception: Saturday, September 30, 2023 | 5:00PM-8:00PM

Oakland, CA (July 11, 2023) — The 2023 Art+Process+Ideas (A+P+I) exhibition features new work by artists-in-residence Liat Berdugo, Heesoo Kwon, and Ranu Mukherjee. These Bay Area artists share approaches to artmaking that engage innovative uses of technology and performance to explore issues including migration, personal and political power, and the environment from feminist perspectives. Amidst ongoing debates about the ethics of AI, and the introduction of Mills campus' first Extended Reality lab and academic program, the work from these artists speaks directly to both global and hyper-local developments.

Liat Berdugo is an artist and writer whose work investigates embodiment, labor, and militarization in relation to capitalism, technological utopianism, and the Middle East. Her projects reflect different areas of her research, including decoding archived images of tree planting in Israel-Palestine to examine colonization, and using the artificial intelligence software ChatGPT to produce short plays and songs about the challenges of institutional change.

“The residency provided time and space for slow work—work that focused on process, revising, rethinking and reconceptualizing. I was grateful to engage with much on the campus, from the green screen studio to faculty and staff, from the landscape and trees to the current students.”

Heesoo Kwon is a multidisciplinary artist from South Korea currently based in the Bay Area. In 2017, Kwon initiated the autobiographical feminist religion Leymusoom as a framework to explore her family history and to create a utopian digital world in opposition to misogyny and patriarchy. Her hybrid videos, photographs, and installations combine archival family photographs and home videos with digital avatars and landscapes to create a freer and more empowered world for both ancestors and future generations.

“Mills campus and studio access are really meaningful and helpful for me to organize my community gatherings. I have been using my studio as a safe gathering space for my collective and collaborators. It's been so great to have access to the beautiful and inspiring campus, and the facilities, ceramic studio, and printing shop, were very helpful in expanding my work.”

Ranu Mukherjee's new pieces map imaginary forests and mines to explore territories that are at once mythical, paradoxical, and at the frontlines of survival. She explores non-human agencies (such as rare earth elements and lithium) simultaneously with analogous psychological territories (such as digging, vulnerability, and the unknown.) Blending visual art and dance, the work includes inspiration from the history of modern dance at Mills and is an invitation to all visitors to physically explore and perform.

“The history of modern dance at Mills inspired me to make pieces that amplify connections between dance, visual art, and sound, and to bring physical movement and performance into the museum space in multiple ways, including collaborations with choreographer Hope Mohr and experimental composer Charlotte Wendy Law. Considering the context, I've been inspired to create a work that honors the history of dialogue between visual and performing arts, and invites visitors to physically engage, experiment, rehearse and/or perform within their own time frame.”

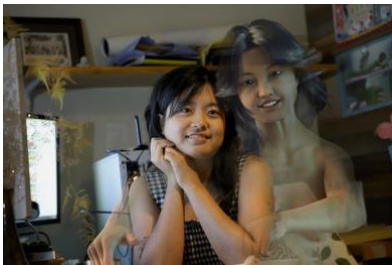
The A+P+I program was established in 2015 to support Bay Area artists who embrace experimentation and social consciousness in their work. The residency fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and provides opportunities for the Mills College at Northeastern University and wider Bay Area communities to interact, learn, and work with local contemporary artists.

The 2023 Art + Process + Ideas Artist Residency is supported through the generosity of the Agnes Cowles Bourne Fund for Special Exhibitions. Additional funding is provided by [We Are the Voices](#), a Mellon Foundation Higher Learning funded project linking Mills College at Northeastern University students and faculty with poets and scholars working in Oakland and beyond.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



[Liat Berdugo](#) is an artist and writer whose work investigates embodiment, labor, and militarization in relation to capitalism, technological utopianism, and the Middle East. Her work has been exhibited and screened at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (San Francisco), MoMA PS1 (New York), Transmediale (Berlin), and The Wrong Biennale (online), among others. Her writing appears in *Rhizome*, *Temporary Art Review*, *Real Life, Places*, and *The Institute for Network Cultures*, among others, and her latest book is [The Weaponized Camera in the Middle East](#) (Bloomsbury/I.B.Tauris, 2021). She is one half of the art collective, [Anxious to Make](#), and is the co-founder of the [Living Room Light Exchange](#), a monthly new media art series. Berdugo received an MFA from RISD and a BA from Brown University. She is currently an associate professor of Art + Architecture at the University of San Francisco. Berdugo lives and works in Oakland, CA.



[Heesoo Kwon](#) is a multidisciplinary artist from South Korea currently in the Bay Area. Positioning herself as an artist, activist, archivist, anthropologist, and religious figure, Kwon builds feminist utopias in the digital realm that liberate one from personal, familial, and historical trauma rooted in patriarchy. Central to her practice and substantial bodies of work is *Leymusoom*, an autobiographical feminist religion she initiated in 2017 as a form of personal resistance against misogyny and an ever-evolving framework for investigating her family histories. Kwon utilizes technologies such as digital archiving, 3D scanning, and animation as her ritualistic and shamanistic tools to regenerate her woman ancestors' lives without constraints of time and space, and to queer her past, present, and utopian dreams. Kwon earned an MFA from the University of California, Berkeley, and is Assistant Professor in the animation department at California College of the Arts in San Francisco.



[Ranu Mukherjee](#)'s collage-based paintings and film installations cultivate ecological, somatic, feminist and multidimensional perspectives on time, energy and power emerging from ruptured colonial legacies. Solo exhibitions and commissioned projects have been presented by 18th Street Arts Center, Los Angeles; de Young Museum, San Francisco; Pennsylvania College of Art and Design; Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; Tarble Art Center, Charleston, IL; San Jose Museum of Art, CA; Singapore Biennale 2022; Karachi Biennale 2019; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Her work is held in the permanent collections of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; de young Museum, the JP Morgan Chase Collection, New York; the Kadist Foundation; the Oakland Museum of California; the San Jose Museum of Art and San Francisco Arts Commission, among others. In 2021, Gallery Wendi Norris released *Shadowtime*, a major monograph on Mukherjee's work over the past decade.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Saturday, September 9, 2023

Seeing it for the Trees – Performative Lecture & Exhibition Sneak Peek

2:00-3:30 PM | Art Museum

Seeing it for the Trees is a performative lecture critically examining the role of forests in the formation and maintenance of Zionism. Instead of using a central screen, this performative lecture will use live computer code to text images to the phones of audience members during the event.

Liat Berdugo presents archival photographs from the Jewish National Fund (JNF), alongside personal images, to understand the role of trees in Israel's ethnonationalist statehood. Central to the project is a computational bot the artist wrote to "scrape" or download the 50,000+ images of the JNF photo archive from the Internet, and text herself one image per hour for over a year. *Seeing it for the Trees* focuses on how the interruptive quality of a bot can challenge the ideological frameworks upon which one was raised—what a close reading of images can untangle about land, ecology, and nationalism. Viewers will themselves get these "interruptions" receiving images to their own personal devices. The work asks, can a person be anti-Zionist and still be Israeli? Can a person object to the core beliefs they grew up with, and still love the family and place that made them?

Saturday, September 30, 2023

Opening Reception

5:00-8:00 PM | Art Museum

See brand new work from A+P+I artists-in-residence Liat Berdugo, Heesoo Kwon, and Ranu Mukherjee, and watch dancers activate the exhibition space in a performance from choreographer [Hope Mohr](#). Refreshments served.

Saturday, October 21, 2023

Leymusoom Voyage

2:00-4:00 PM | Art Museum

Join artist Heesoo Kwon on a voyage across her artistic collaborators and communities. Set sail with a Korean drumming performance by [끼리 끼리 \(Kkiri Kkiri\)](#), followed by an artist talk from Leymusoom Bible collaborators Kwon, Kazumi Chin (poet, organizer, and Ph.D. student in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley), and artist-publisher Vivian Sming of [Sming Sming Books](#). Experience a performance from non-binary Korean artist collective, Dong-Ji Collective, and finally, return to shore with sound performances by artist [Breno Aragon](#) and composer and Mills MFA alum [Julie Moon](#).

Saturday, November 4, 2023

Performance with Charlotte Law and Beatriz Escobar

4:00-6:00 PM | Art Museum

British interdisciplinary artist Charlotte Law and movement artist Beatriz Escobar will activate Ranu Mukherjee's marley dancefloor installation, inviting the audience into a visceral and lyrical experience. Following the performance will be a Q&A with Mukherjee, Law, and Escobar who will discuss their ongoing collaboration.

IMAGE CREDITS

Lead Image (L): Ranu Mukherjee, Detail from *dance and sob*, 2023, Pigment, cristalina, UV inkjet print on silk and cotton sari cloth, copper beads, calcite beads, and magnesium crystal on linen, 48 in. x 48 in. Photo courtesy Gallery Wendi Norris.

Lead Image (R top) Liat Berdugo, *Seeing it for the Trees*, 2023

Lead Image (R bottom) Heesoo Kwon, *Mago Leymusoom*, 2022, Multimedia installation with two-channel video. Photo by Robert Bordsdorf

Heesoo Kwon Headshot: Original photo by Andrew Sungtaek Ingersoll, Leymusoom rendered by Heesoo Kwon

Ranu Mukherjee Headshot: Photo by Colin Rainey

ABOUT MILLS COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

Founded in 1925, Mills College Art Museum is a forum for exploring art and ideas and a laboratory for contemporary art practices. Through innovative exhibitions, programs, and collections, the museum engages and inspires the intellectual and creative life of the Mills community as well as the diverse audiences of the Bay Area and beyond. mcam.mills.edu

Museum hours: Tuesday-Sunday 11:00am-4:00pm, Wednesday 11:00am-7:30pm

Admission is FREE and open to the public.
