

MILLS COLLEGE
ART MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**For the First Time in Mills' History, Book Arts Joins
the Annual MFA Thesis Exhibition**



MURMURATIONS: 2023 MFA EXHIBITION
MILLS COLLEGE AT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
APRIL 22 – MAY 28, 2023

OPENING RECEPTION: SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023 | 5:00-7:00 PM

Oakland, CA (March 15, 2023) – Mills College Art Museum is pleased to announce *Murmurations*, the 2023 MFA thesis exhibition presenting the work of graduating MFA candidates with concentrations in studio and book arts. This year's featured artists are Yaminah Abdur-Rahim, Nana Aforo, Courtney Griffith, Andrea Guskin, Thad Higa, Tianzong Jiang, Lyn Patterson, and Jordan Kaleonohe Siangco.

Presented as a group exhibition in MCAM's historic main gallery, *Murmurations* showcases a final body of work from each graduate, curated by museum director Stephanie Hanor and the college's distinguished studio art faculty. Commanding a range of strategies—painting, sculpture, installation, video, and more—these emerging artists venture into fresh conceptual and material terrain, inviting the viewer to contemplate mythology and the sacred, mourning and recovery, and our perception of reality.

THE ARTISTS

YAMINAH ABDUR-RAHIM uses experimental video, performance, and sculpture to honor mystical practices in everyday Black American life. Her work situates Afrodiasporic mythology within the specific geographies and histories of the San Francisco Bay Area.

NANA AFORO's multi-disciplinary work spans painting, music, and video. His work explores themes of our common humanity, interpersonal relationships, and our relationship to nature in the face of modern pressures towards separation.

COURTNEY GRIFFITH uses destruction as a creative tool, tangling, burning, and tearing materials that easily scar, like rope, wood, and paper. Sourcing charcoal, driftwood, and sand from California coastal ecosystems, she creates large scale drawings, sculptures, and performances that work with the poetic cycles of damage and restoration to create space for mourning and recovery.

ANDREA GUSKIN works across photography, sculpture, and painting to create art in which the familiar converses with the existential. With interests in quantum physics, ancestral archives, and Buddhist practice she transforms everyday domestic materials—spices, funnels, foil, thread—to explore our relationship to the vast, from microscopic particles to deep space.

THAD HIGA works with artists' books, concrete poetry, printmaking, collage, typography, and graphic design. His current work looks at the relationships of identity ideation, the commodification of the individual, and mass information access through technology.

TIANZONG JIANG's film/video, durational performance, and installation investigate cultural identity, language, Buddhist philosophy, and meditation practice. Using humor, absurdity, ambiguity, and absurd contradiction, he provokes questions about the perception of reality.

LYN PATTERSON explores sacred altar spaces in order to pay remembrance to collective identity making and communal memory. Her books and print work showcase the power of knowing one's ancestors and highlight how the fabric of our families can be deeply ingrained in our shared histories.

JORDAN KALEONOHE SIANGCO's oil paintings and sculptures forge expansive abstract worlds that give form and flesh to the intangible. His fluid gestural forms materialize, decay, and evanesce to highlight the interconnectivity between creation and degradation. Corporeal forms undulate through grotto-like spaces to create a balance between the uncomfortable and serene.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Opening Reception

Saturday, April 22, 2023

5:00-7:00pm

Congratulate the graduating MFA students on the culmination of their graduate studies and their continuation of an exciting artistic practice. Refreshments served.

An Afternoon of Art, Workshops, and Performance

Saturday, May 20, 2023

3:00-5:00pm

Hosted by the 2023 MFA graduates in studio and book arts. Attendees can visit the exhibition and chat with the artists about their work, enjoy a hands-on natural dye workshop led by Yaminah Abdur-Rahim, create their very own cyanotype spice portrait with Andrea Guskin, and experience *The Weight of Absence*, an intimate performance piece from Courtney Griffith. Refreshments served.

Visit mcam.mills.edu for details.

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.
