

# MILLS COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Exhibition at Mills College Art Museum celebrates the mentorship of artist and professor  
Hung Liu



IMAGE: Hung Liu, *White Rice Bowl*, 2014, Mixed media, 80 in. x 80 in.  
Gift of the Artist and Trillium Graphics, 2015.10

## LOOK UP TO THE SKY HUNG LIU'S LEGACY OF MENTORING WOMEN ARTISTS

JANUARY 20 – MARCH 24, 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 20, 2024 | 5:00PM-7:00PM

**Oakland, CA (November 1, 2023)** — Mills College Art Museum is pleased to announce its winter exhibition, *Look Up to the Sky, Hung Liu's Legacy of Mentoring Women Artists*, on view from January 20 through March 24, 2024.

An exceptionally gifted educator, Hung Liu (1948-2021) was a vibrant and vital part of the artist community in the Bay Area and beyond. Just before her untimely death in 2021, Liu began conversations with MCAM to organize an exhibition showcasing the work of an amazing group of

women artists that she taught and mentored during her tenure as a professor in the Mills College Art Department. This legacy exhibition is the realization of that idea and features the work of Rosana Castrillo Diaz, Nicole Fein, Danielle Lawrence, Monica Lundy, Nancy Mintz, Sandra Ono, Susan Preston, Mel Prest, Rachelle Reichert, Yoshiko Shimano, Gina Tuzzi, Lien Truong, and Bambi Waterman.

Recognized as America's most important Chinese artist, Hung Liu's paintings mine her personal and cultural history to create artwork that calls on the most poignant and intimate aspects of her own memory as well as how place shapes memories and identity. Through her work, Liu had the ability to reveal herself as both immigrant and emigrant, insider, and outsider. She spent her career focusing on the dispossessed, people who have been traditionally elided from historical narratives, giving them a voice and foregrounding their stories.

Born in Changchun, China, in 1948, a year before the creation of the People's Republic of China, Hung Liu lived through Maoist China and experienced the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Trained as a social realist painter and muralist, she came to the United States in 1984 to attend the University of California, San Diego, where she received her MFA. One of the first people from mainland China to study abroad and pursue an art career, she moved to northern California in 1990 where she was a tenured professor in the Art Department at Mills College for over 20 years.

## THE ARTISTS

**ROSANA CASTRILLO DIAZ** centers her artistic practice on the exploration of light. Her experimental body of work consists primarily of sculpture and wall-oriented pieces in a variety of materials and forms from veils of looped Scotch tape and balls of twisted paper to painted wall murals and, recently, text. She is concerned with perception, and the capacity to find beauty and inspiration in small moments or unexpected places. She has exhibited work at Anthony Meier Fine Arts; CCA Wattis Institute of Contemporary Art; SFMOMA; ICA San Jose, among many others. She received the Artadia Art Award; SFMOMA SECA Award; and the Mills College Jay DeFeo Award. She holds BAs from Facultad de Bellas Artes, Universidad Complutense, Madrid (1993) and the Cleveland Institute of Art (1996); a Post-Baccalaureate from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (1999); and an MFA from Mills College (2003). Castrillo Díaz lives and works in San Francisco.

**NICOLE PHUNGRASAMEE FEIN** is noted for her agile handling of pigment on paper. Going back two decades, her drawings are made sequentially, always evolving, but delicacy and tranquility constant. Earth tones in overlapping strokes define the earliest pieces, with a result visually akin to weaving. Color choices expanded and combined with horizontal lines, evoking landscapes and seascapes. Lines radiating from a central point introduced the circle to what had been square. The challenge of articulating the singularity of the present moment drives the work. She attended Tufts University (BA), the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (BFA), and Mills College (MFA). Fein has exhibited nationally and internationally, with work reviewed in ArtForum, the Week, Philadelphia Inquirer, San Francisco Chronicle, Artweek, and ARTnews. Her work is in public collections including BAMFPA; Hammer Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; SFMOMA; the Whitney, among others. Fein lives and works in San Francisco. <https://www.nicolephungrasameefein.com/>

**DANIELLE LAWRENCE** is a visual artist whose work merges unconventional materials, painted imagery, and 3-dimensional form to renegotiate painting's traditional anatomy and definition. Her recent series combines techniques of destruction, repurposing, and repair through staining, washing, and sewing to evoke transfeminist mythology and mapping. Her work has been featured in exhibitions in the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Brooklyn, including at Minnesota Street Projects; the Walter and McBean Galleries, San Francisco Art Institute; Traywick Contemporary; the Bedford Gallery at the Lesher Center for the Arts; and [ 2nd floor projects ]. Her work is public and private collections, such as the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, San Francisco, CA; C.H.O.M.P., Monterey Bay, CA; Fidelity Headquarters, Boston, MA; Mills College Art Museum, Oakland, CA; and the Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA. Lawrence received a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute (2003) and an MFA from Mills College (2011).

<https://danielleelawrence.com/home.html>

Recognized as America's most important Chinese artist, **HUNG LIU**'s paintings mine personal and cultural history to create artwork on the most poignant and intimate aspects of her own memory, and how place shapes memories and identity. Through her work, Liu revealed herself as both immigrant and emigrant, insider and outsider. She foregrounded the stories of the dispossessed, people who have been traditionally elided from historical narratives. Born in Changchun, China, in 1948, Liu lived through Maoist China and experienced the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. Trained as a social realist painter and muralist, she came to the US in 1984 to attend the University of California, San Diego, where she received her MFA. One of the first people from mainland China to study abroad and pursue an art career, Liu moved to northern California in 1990 where she was a tenured professor at Mills College for over 20 years. <http://www.hungliu.com/>

**MONICA LUNDY** is an Italian American artist whose mixed media paintings and drawings commemorate places and people who have been historically marginalized: psychiatric hospital patients, prison inmates, sex workers, and other lost, forgotten souls. Emphasizing site-specific installation, Lundy utilizes non-traditional painting media, including liquid porcelain, rusted steel, and an ephemeral painting process of terra cotta clay applied directly to the wall. Her installations have been exhibited on Alcatraz Island; Montalvo Arts Center; de Saisset Museum; Rome's Mandrione district and historic decommissioned psychiatric hospital Santa Maria della Pietà. Notable exhibitions include Nancy Toomey Fine Art (San Francisco); Turner Carroll Gallery (Santa Fe); Walter Maciel Gallery (Los Angeles); San Francisco Arts Commission; and ICA San Jose. Lundy holds an MFA from Mills College (2010) and a BFA from School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1996). She is the subject of *Monica Lundy*, edited by Giuliana Benassi and published by Silvana Editoriale (2022). <https://www.monicalundy.com/>

Sculptor and printmaker **NANCY MINTZ** considers herself a "materials artist," taking inspiration from the innate potential of the diverse media that she has mastered throughout her career, and their unique ability to signify meaning. Her current body of work employs brass and paper in a series of large, site-responsive installations to examine the diversity and fragility of natural biological communities, the complex processes of growth and succession, and the interaction between the natural and the built worlds. Mintz received her BFA from California College of Art, Oakland, and her MFA from Mills College in 1993. Her work is featured in prominent private and corporate collections and has been exhibited at

noted venues such the Bolinas Museum, California Craft Museum, Catharine Clark Gallery, Kala Art Institute, Riverside Museum of Art, and Southern Exposure, among many others.

<https://nancymintz.net/>

**SANDRA ONO** is an interdisciplinary artist who lives and works in Berkeley, California. Ono has exhibited in Texas, New York, and throughout California. She has completed residencies at Headlands Center for the Arts, University of Texas at Dallas, Southern Exposure, Vermont Studio Center, Mascot Studio, Minnesota Street Project as a recipient of the TOSA Studio Award, and Kala Art Institute as a recipient of the Kala Fellowship Award. <https://sandraono.com/home.html>

**MEL PREST** is a non-objective painter whose work is focused on color and perceptual visual relationships. She has had recent solo shows at the Schneider Museum of Art (2022), Ashland, OR; Galleri Urbane (2022, 2018), Dallas, TX; K Imperial Fine Art (2021), San Francisco; Chandra Cerrito Contemporary (2017), Oakland. Prest has been awarded residencies at the MH deYoung Museum; the Ragdale Foundation; the Sam and Adele Golden Artist Foundation; Willapa Bay AIR; the Wassaic Project; and Vermont Studio Center. Her work is held in collections at Apple; BAMPFA; the Crocker Museum of Art; Google; Kaiser Permanente; Marin General Hospital; and Mills College Art Museum, among others. She is a founding member of Transmitter, a collaborative curatorial gallery initiative in Brooklyn, New York. Prest received her BFA from Rhode Island School of Design and MFA from Mills College. She is represented by Galleri Urbane, Dallas and K.Imperial Fine Art, San Francisco.

<https://www.melprest.com/>

**RACHELLE REICHERT** is a visual artist and educator based in the San Francisco Bay Area (Chochenyo Ohlone territory). She works in a variety of media to explore landscapes permanently altered by climate change and industrialization. Reichert is interested in earth observation satellite imagery, specifically, how nature is composed in images and then circulated to a public. Her research focuses on sites of specific extracted materials: salt, clay, lithium. Research findings are interpreted through drawings, photographs, and mixed-media artworks that focus on materials found at the site. Her artwork is included in collections including SFMOMA, Facebook, and Adobe, and has been exhibited at the Contemporary Jewish Museum, Center for Contemporary Art at Pacific Northwest College of Art, Anglim/Trimble, and September Gallery. She has presented artwork at the California Climate Change Symposium, San Francisco State of the Estuary Conference, and American Geophysical Union Meeting and regularly lectures on her artwork and research. <https://rachellereichert.com/>

Japanese born, **YOSHIKO SHIMANO** challenges to transform the paper so it no longer speaks as “paper” but has a density of physical presence that is one with its imagery. By using many different printmaking marks, she unifies existing mediums and layers into a seamless language. When hung in one space, her large-scale installation prints become environmental works that interact with architecture and create a new atmosphere. Embracing the artist’s responsibility within society to expand beyond studio practices and gallery presentations, Shimano has offered local and international outreach projects and made prints for various minority groups and victims of natural disaster with her students in the Department of Art at the University of New Mexico. She received her BFA from California College of the Arts and MFA

from Mills College in Oakland, California. Shimano currently lives and works in Albuquerque, New Mexico. <https://yoshikoshimano.com/>

**LIEN TRUONG**'s art practice examines cultural and material ideologies and notions of heritage. Her work blends painting techniques, materials and philosophies, and military, textile, food, and art histories to create hybrid forms that interrogate the relationship between aesthetics and doctrine. Her paintings have been presented at the National Portrait Gallery, Nasher Museum of Art, Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Oakland Museum of California, Art Hong Kong, and Sea Focus in Singapore, among others. Truong is the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant, fellowships from the Institute of the Arts and Humanities, the North Carolina Arts Council, the Jack and Gertrude Murphy Fine Arts, and residencies at OMCA, Jentel Foundation, and Marble House Project. She graduated with a BFA in 1999 from Humboldt State University and an MFA from Mills College in 2001. Truong is Assistant Professor of Painting and Drawing at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. <https://www.lientruong.com/>

**GINA TUZZI** was born and raised in Santa Cruz, California. She attended Humboldt State University, receiving a BA in painting and printmaking and later Mills College where she received her MFA in painting. Gina has exhibited her work both nationally and internationally, is a Murphy and Cadogan fellow, and a two-time SECA nominee. She teaches painting at Cal Poly Humboldt and lives in Blue Lake, California. Her practice, which spans painting, drawing and sculpture, is inspired largely by counter-culture ideologies and a romanticized neo-bohemian aesthetic. Tuzzi appropriates symbols and icons from popular love songs, spiritual divination, pop culture, familial history, and an intimate personal narrative. <https://www.ginatuzzi.com/>

**BAMBI WATERMAN** uses her artwork to start discussions on conservation and the need to protect endangered species. The primary focus on her paintings, drawings, and sculptural works has been an investigation of form in the natural world. Her explorations aspire to lend a clarity and beauty to the subtle complexities found in the process of life forms. The work reflects her search to find something simple, beautiful, and pure out of confusion and the difficulty of life. Waterman received a BFA in sculpture from the San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, and an MFA from Mills College.

<https://www.bambiwaternermanart.com/>

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

### OPENING RECEPTION

**Saturday, January 20, 2024 | 4:00-6:00 PM**

Join Mills College Art Museum for the opening reception of *Look up to the Sky*. Enjoy custom fortune cookies in which exhibiting artists will reveal lessons learned from, and words of gratitude inspired by, Hung Liu. Attendees will have the opportunity to adorn the bushes in front of the museum with their own experiences of Liu's mentorship, talent, and generosity. Refreshments served.

## **2024 JANE GREEN ENDOWED LECTURE IN ART HISTORY**

**Saturday, February 24, 2024 | 3:00-5:00 PM**

Registration Requested: [janegreenlecture.eventbrite.com](https://janegreenlecture.eventbrite.com)

In conjunction with the special exhibition *Look Up to the Sky, Hung Liu's Legacy of Mentoring Women Artists*, this year's Jane Green Endowed Lecture in Art History features a conversation with three artists mentored by Hung Liu (1948-2021), acclaimed Chinese American artist and beloved professor of art at Mills College.

Dorothy Moss, founding director of the Hung Liu Estate, will moderate the conversation among artists Rosana Castrillo Díaz, Nicole Phungrasamee Fein, and Mel Prest, former students of Hung Liu and alumnae of the Mills College MFA Program in Studio Art. Reception immediately to follow at the Reinhardt Alumnae House.

Before the conversation, join MCAM Director Stephanie Hanor at 2:00pm for a curator-led tour of the exhibition.

## **CLOSING PROGRAM**

**Saturday, March 23, 2024 | 4:00-6:00 PM**

Join Mills College Art Museum, exhibiting artists, and the Mills College Studio Art community for a potluck and slideshow celebrating the legacy of Hung Liu.

## **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](http://mcam.mills.edu)

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

Admission is FREE and open to the public.

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