

Friends Indeed Gallery



On view

Opens July 14th, 2022

Friends Indeed Bayview
Open by appointment

Catalina Ouyang, font VII, 2021. Soapstone, raw egg, white vinegar, stop loss trap, horse hair, binder, plaster, pigment, beeswax, epoxy clay, paper. 6 x 15 x 9 in.

Vaster than Empires

Chanel Khoury, Candice Lin, Becca Mann, Catalina Ouyang, Estefania Puerta, Lauren Quin, Lauren Satlowski, Ilana Savdie, Pauline Shaw, and Stephanie Temma Hier

Gallery address:
716 Sacramento St.
San Francisco, CA 94108

Mailing address:
2458 Great Hwy
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The Infinite Egg —

Throughout world mythology, the Demiurge, Orphic, cosmic, or infinite egg represents the source from which all creation hatches. Cradled and incubated in a primordial ocean the infinite egg connects past, present, and future sentience as it engages with the material present while stretching into future reproductive realities. Featuring recent work by ten artists, *Vaster than Empires* tests, renders, and complicates the enmeshed boundaries between earth and egg, consciousness and cosmos, land and body, setting and subject.

A felted tapestry by Pauline Shaw depicts rootless and interconnected nodes implying vessels, seeds, and spores that preserve a material inheritance. In a creature-object hybrid, Catalina Ouyang's shell-like basin is matted in hair, fur, and natural detritus as if it washed up on shore. Ouyang plugs the sculpture's orifice with a translucent yolk in a gesture that reverses the primal separation from oneness while re-enacting the psyche's delayed attempts to return. In a painting by Lauren Satlowski, a dripping existential subject gasps in catatonic horror as an appendage is threaded through their gaping abdomen hole. Cyclical, transformation, and on the edge of abstraction, Lauren Quin's paintings engage limbs, tubes, and tunnels that spawn and multiply in an unstoppable momentum.

Looping Time —

Connecting the iron core of the earth to the metal's presence in blood the measurement of linear historical time is alternatively replaced by a looping pulse of geological time through a blood-earth connection. Futuristic depictions of smooth and transparent biomorphic vessels float within the reflective cyber-scapes of Chanel Khoury's paintings, envisioning frictionless worlds where metal and flesh are fluently integrated. Estefania Puerta's decorated metal plate works reference a shared materiality as they fuse together the terrestrial life forces of plants, animals, and humans. Likewise, Ilana Savdie's bouquets of bodies solvently merge plants and humans as fertile limbs grow, bloom, and dance across the canvas.

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The Sentient Planet —

*Our vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow...*

Originating in Andrew Marvell's 1681 metaphysical poem, *To His Coy Mistress*, science-fiction writer Ursula K. Le Guin's eponymously titled 1971 short-story, *Vaster than Empires and More Slow*, elucidates a symbiotic relationship between a planet and its inhabitants while illustrating the conflicting drives put in motion in encounters with the other. Set within the author's Hainish universe, a crew of colonial travelers descend on World 4470, described as "one big green thought". As an undifferentiated singular consciousness, the planet's all-encompassing vegetation serves as both setting and character. When the team's empathetic "Sensor" is spooked by the vegetative landscape's response to his presence his fear is transmitted, amplified, and reflected back. To solve the team's foil one must conjure a utopian vision of what a para-human solidarity between inhabitants and habitats might look like while acknowledging the global damage of extractive economies that exploit people and resources to uphold illusions of limitless bounty.

Meditating on multitude ways the natural world is controlled and used, a second painting by Lauren Satlowski pairs a scorpion petrified in a glass cube alongside a vile implying venom extraction. The subjects inhabiting Becca Mann's dimly lit natural settings emerge through veils of darkness as if their presence is not intended for the human gaze. In works by Stephanie Temma Hier, sculptural ceramic frames relate to and contradict the images they house. Encircled in a pale green car tire, a cheetah is forced to coexist within this foreign and possibly threatening object. Crafted with the colonial histories of natural materials in mind, Candice Lin's wool felt army blanket-turned-flag is a hand-dyed banner using indigo, cochineal, anatto, and turmeric. Drawing from equal parts mysticism, science, and history, *Vaster than Empires* attests to the intrinsic connections and ruptures between bodies and environments.

— Marie Heilich

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About Friends Indeed Gallery

Friends Indeed Gallery is an absurdly small experimental vitrine on the border of San Francisco's historic Chinatown and Financial District. Our gallery-cum-institution reimagines the traditional framework of what a dexterous contemporary art space looks like; borrowing from both to meet the needs of artists today. Friends Indeed Gallery is founded by curator-dealer Micki Meng with Eric Li and Nazli Ercan.

Starting this year, 10% of our annual profit goes toward land conservation.

Sales inquiries

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Press inquiries

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Friends Indeed Gallery

716 Sacramento Street (at Kearny)

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Gallery Hours

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