

Textures of Feminist Perseverance
March 1 through April 27, 2024

The exhibition is presented in partnership with The James Gallery CUNY Graduate Center [365 5th Ave, NYC] and continues at The James through May 10, 2024

Artists

Sarah Ahmad, Mimi Biyao Bai, Sonya Blesofsky, Langdon Graves, Sara Jimenez, Martine Kaczynski, Rhea Karam, Amy Khoshbin, Fay Ku, Ani Liu, Jodie Lyn-Kee-Chow, Jen Mazza, Deborah Mesa-Pelly, Ashley Minner, Natalie Moore, Ellie Murphy, Dina Weiss

Presented in two venues—Cuchifritos Gallery and The James Gallery—***Textures of Feminist Perseverance*** asks how women's daily experiences and contributions are recorded in the public spheres of our physical, virtual, and social lives. On this occasion, **Cuchifritos Gallery** is very pleased to present two projects, Mimi Biyao Bai's ***Net*** within the gallery space and the collaborative project ***I Pledge*** on Essex Market's exterior windows.

Net, artist **Mimi Biyao Bai's** site-responsive project, contemplates safety, survival, and visibility. Drawing a parallel between camouflage and assimilation, Bai considers both as labor-intensive adaptations for survival that selectively reveal and/or conceal.

Obscuring the traditional white box of the gallery in a wash of safety orange—a color often worn by hunters due to its high visibility to most humans and the difficulty of discernment it causes for prey animals—Bai asks visitors to question how one can be simultaneously invisible and hyper-visible. Effective camouflage requires the *camoufleur* to be aware of their environment, how they are being perceived in relation to it, and *who* is doing the perceiving.

Suspended across the space, an accumulation of individual knots forms a flexible mass that can expand and contract in response to the environment. ***Net*** can be viewed as a temporary shelter, a flayed ghillie suit, and a matrix of entanglements that can catch, hold, and capture. Hand-made using thousands of yards of nylon and cotton twine, the artist used her body weight to achieve the proper tension for each knot. Bai's intense physical labor makes tangible the often invisible and immaterial effort necessary to "blend in" to one's surroundings.

By abstracting fragments of her personal and familial history into patterns and forms, the artist has developed an iconography that she employs throughout her larger practice. A prominent example is the ghost, seen in *This Kind of Memory Requires Motion* on view in the gallery's backroom. The character of the ghost emerged from a costume Bai wore as a child during her first Halloween in the US, then evolved through her research into ghillie suits—garments worn by snipers and hunters to conceal their bodies from an enemy or target. Through drawing and sculpture, Bai re-imagines and enacts alternative perspectives on survival, adaptation, interdependence, and creative possibility.

Also on view, on the exterior of Essex Market at the corner of Norfolk and Broome streets, is a representation of ***I Pledge***. Presented here as a vinyl installation, ***I Pledge*** was created by **Amy Khoshbin, House of Trees, and Naomi Shihab Nye** in response to mounting xenophobia and gender-based violence for the one-year anniversary of the 2017 Women's March. ***I Pledge*** continues to advocate for a

public covenant of respect for all. The collaborators offer a poetic pledge to fight for inclusive, empathetic, humane, and intersectional change.

The exhibition continues at The James Gallery in midtown Manhattan, centering the work of 17 female-identifying artists, who imagine ways for women to take up the space they are already producing. What might a city honoring women's lived experiences look like? How can the city be a living archive of women's accomplishments in a visual vocabulary that may not already be recognized in the dominant discourse? This work is often achieved through a preoccupation with hands-on and labor-intensive making practices that foreground physical and embodied attentiveness to materials, social gathering, and awareness of time.

Work on view

Market exterior on Norfolk Street at Broome

Amy Khoshbin, House of Trees, and
Naomi Shihab Nye
I Pledge
2024
Vinyl installation

Main gallery space

Mimi Biyao Bai
Net
2020-ongoing
Hand-tied nylon and cotton twine, clay, paracord,
window tint

Gallery backroom

Mimi Biyao Bai
This kind of memory requires motion 5
2021
Watercolor monotype on Hahnemühle

Mimi Biyao Bai
This kind of memory requires motion 7
2021
Watercolor monotype on Hahnemühle

Mimi Biyao Bai
This kind of memory requires motion 3
2021
Watercolor monotype on Hahnemühle

Mimi Biyao Bai
This kind of memory requires motion 1
2021
Watercolor monotype on Hahnemühle

Mimi Biyao Bai was born in Xi'an, China, and is based in Brooklyn, NY. Her practice encompasses sculpture, drawing, and film. Bai has presented work at institutions including Artists Space, the Boston Center for the Arts, BRIC, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Her films have screened at Rooftop Films, the Rockaway Film Festival, and the Maryland Film Festival. Bai was a SIP Fellow at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, a NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow for Interdisciplinary Work, and a recipient of two Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grants. She has been an Artist-in-Residence at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Pioneer Works, the Saltonstall Foundation, and the Santa Fe Art Institute, among others. Bai attended the Whitney Independent Study Program and is a graduate of Alfred University (MFA Sculpture) and Wesleyan University (BA Sociology).

Her forthcoming solo show, *More-than-Self-Defense*, opens at A.I.R. Gallery in May 2024.

<https://mimibiyaobai.com/>

Amy Khoshbin is an Iranian-American Brooklyn-based artist and activist. Her practice builds bridges between disparate communities to counteract fear with a collective sense of empowered radical acceptance. She has shown at venues such as The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Times Square Arts, Artpace, The High Line, Socrates Sculpture Park, Arsenal Contemporary, National Sawdust, and festivals such as River to River, FORMAT, and South by Southwest. She has received residencies at spaces such as The Watermill Center, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Project for Empty Space, Anderson Ranch, and Banff Centre for the Arts.

She has received a NYFA Grant, Franklin Furnace Fund, and a Rema Hort Mann Grant. Khoshbin received an MFA from New York University in Tisch School of the Arts and a BA in Film and Media Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

House of Trees (HOT) is a family-run art collective— Amy Khoshbin, Jennifer Khoshbin, Noah Khoshbin— producing high-visibility, publicly engaging visual and installation projects. Located in San Antonio and New York City, its mission centers on collaboration, arts, and politics. House of Trees has mounted projects nationally and internationally with venues including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Artpace, Times Square Arts, and The Watermill Center.

Naomi Shihab Nye is a Palestinian-American author of numerous books of poems, including *Transfer*, *You and Yours*, which received the Isabella Gardner Poetry Award; *19 Varieties of Gazelle*; *Poems of the Middle East*; and *Fuel*. Nye's honors include awards from the International Poetry Forum, the Texas Institute of Letters, and four Pushcart Prizes. She has been a Lannan Fellow, a Guggenheim Fellow, and a Witter Bynner Fellow, and received The Academy of American Poets' Lavan Award, selected by W.S. Merwin. She lives in San Antonio, Texas.

Textures of Feminist Perseverance is conceived by artist Dina Weiss and curator Katherine Carl, Ph.D. (James Gallery Institute for Art, Inquiry & Collaborative Practice, CUNY Graduate Center) and presented in partnership with Jodi Waynberg, Executive Director of Artists Alliance Inc and Director of Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space.

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