Zalika Azim: Blood Memories (or a going to ground)
Exhibition Checklist



***Score I (Studies for Gravity)*, 2022**
Letterpress prints, ink, seven wooden shelves
Courtesy of the artist

In her work, Azim uses gravity's pull as a metaphor for historic and contemporary systemic forces that both constrain and enable the freedom of movement for Black communities in the U.S. Designed as a score for movement interpretation, *Score I (Studies for Gravity)* explores the potential to manipulate gravity. Azim transcribes basic movements associated with the jump (up and down) into short text prompts, exhausting the language of gravity-based direction to the point of describing movements that defy the physical limits of gravity entirely (up to go up to go). While movement in Azim's score is always tied to a departure point and anticipated destination, the direction of movement is constantly in flux. Azim asks the viewer to enact these movements until the departure point, direction, and destination are no longer clearly defined, wherein boundlessness and the endurance that movement requires, however fleeting, are achieved.



***Resonance*, 2025**
Two-channel audio installation, speakers, subwoofer, mixer, wood, carpet
59:59 minutes, looped
Courtesy of the artist

Credits**:**
Sound Direction: Zalika Azim
Drums: David Hawkins
Bass: Dale Black
Piano: Salvador Becerra
Sound Engineering and Design: Darius Jamal Nelson and Enzo Okumu

Recorded in 2024 at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, NE. Edited and assembled in 2025 at the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX.

Between 2023 and 2025, Azim spent her time at the St. Elmo Artist Residency at UT Austin and the Artist-in-Residence Program at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha researching and documenting freedmen's towns. Freedmen towns are historically self-sustaining Black communities established by formerly enslaved people. Since many of these early Black settlements no longer exist or lack physical markers indicating their locations, Azim relied on archival materials culled from historical repositories to navigate the altered contemporary landscapes where these towns once stood. At Bemis, Azim collaborated with musicians to explore these obscured sites of Black life through music. Together as a group, Azim and the artists recalled their personal experiences living in communities of color and sonically responded to the question, "What might be generated through an individual and collective reimagining of space, history, and land ownership?"

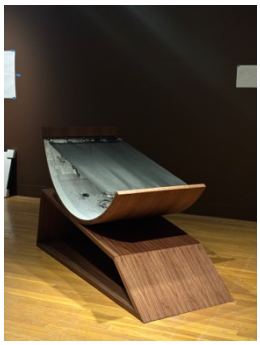
The resulting work by Azim combines archival audio sourced from the Austin Historical Society with recordings from the musicians' improvised jazz session. The convergence of methods and materials, between historical artifacts and improvised musical

performance, transforms the spiritual weight of historical absence and personal memory into a resonant presence that connects disparate perspectives, multiple timescales, and cross-country geographies.



***Notes for the omnidirectional #1–3*, 2025**
Graphite, soil, and charcoal on paper
Courtesy of the artist

Commissioned by the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX



***Ascension Device III (for realities not yet constituted)*, 2025**
Wood, Teslin, archival inkjet print, trampoline springs
Courtesy of the artist
Photo: "Group of African American children swimming and splashing at the segregated Rosewood Park swimming pool," by Ellison Photo Company, Austin, TX, c. 1930. [PICA-24215], Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

Commissioned by the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX

Ascension Device III (for realities not yet constituted) is a continuation of Azim's kinetic works, *Ascension Device I* (2022) and *Ascension Device II* (2024), which use gravity as a metaphor for the forces that limit movement, and propose jumping as a form of

resistance and method of time travel. In this work, springs and trampoline mesh veil an image culled from the Austin History Center archives depicting Black children playing in the Rosewood Park swimming pool, a community space located just north of the Colorado River in the former freedmen town of Rosewood in East Austin. Azim's work envisions a speculative person using this trampoline device in order to jump through time and gain close proximity to the past encapsulated within the Rosewood Park image. Despite all efforts, the device's tension prevents jumpers from fully touching the past and instead propels them back into the present.



***Some things we know to be true…or to arrive under and in (Webber's Prairie, Austin, TX)*, 2025**
Archival inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist

Commissioned by the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX



***For architectures old and new (Littig, Austin, TX)*, 2025**
Archival inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist

Commissioned by the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX



***To come with clouds descending (Webber's Prairie, Austin, TX)*, 2025**
Archival inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist

Commissioned by the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX



***A threefold truth tracked on the tongues of thousands (Webber's Prairie, Austin, TX)*, 2025**
Archival inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist

Commissioned by the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX



A parting hymn for those cast in, and cast out of the margin (Clarksville, Austin, TX), 2025
Archival inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist

Commissioned by the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX



After everything, and before somewhere else, 2025
Archival inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist

Commissioned by the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX



***Memorial acclamations (Littig, Austin, TX)*, 2025**
Archival inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist

Commissioned by the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX



***We'll understand it better by and by (Clarksville, Austin, TX)*, 2025**
Archival inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist

Commissioned by the Visual Arts Center in conjunction with the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship and 2025 Every Page Foundation Artist Residency, Austin, TX

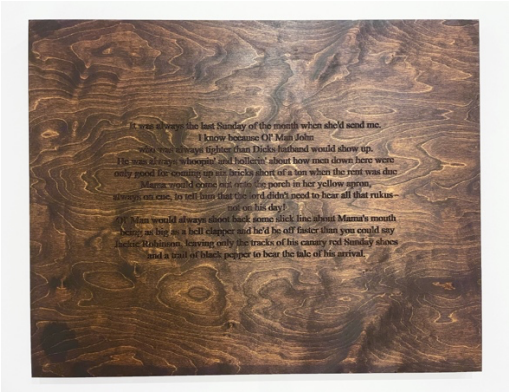
During the 2023–24 St. Elmo Arts Residency Fellowship at UT, Azim researched and photographed former freedman community sites in Austin and nearby cities. These freedmen towns, established by formerly enslaved people, were self-sustaining Black communities that endured well into the 20th century. Today, however, most of these communities in Austin and across Central Texas have been lost to gentrification, city

planning, and private development. Because there is no official registry of these sites or their former residents, Azim turned to the Austin History Center archives, collecting historical documents, images, and maps to direct her travel through Central Texas to those sites. The resulting photographs memorialize these spaces as sacred sites of Black history, drawing attention to the ways the landscape, however transformed, serves as a material witness to Black life, community presence, and defiance in Texas.



***Blood Memories (or a going to ground)*, 2023**
Single-channel video (color, silent), 17:07 minutes, looped
Courtesy of the artist

In 2023, Azim collaborated with artist Jennifer Harge to examine forms of historical and ancestral knowledge carried within a Black person's body, or what Harge refers to as "blood memories." Using the question, "How might we arrive?" as their starting point, Azim and Harge examined how the refusal to depart towards any final, fixed destination can serve as a methodology that challenges traditional definitions of geography, which prioritize conquest and development within a confined space or border. In the film, Harge's improvised, often repetitive movements evoke a non-linear sense of time, where the inherited past and envisioned future coexist in the present, in opposition to notions of linear progress and colonial movement. *Blood Memories* suggests that bonds between Black peoples' bodies cannot be located within a single destination or endpoint, but rather in shared histories and the collective knowledge generated through continuous, relational motion.



Photographs Not Taken (The tale of his arrival)
Engraved wood panel, wood finish, car oil
Courtesy of the artist



***Photographs Not Taken (To speak of a lush hot blooded land, to the dispossessed, too busy to visit)*, 2021**
Engraved wood panel, wood finish, car oil
Courtesy of the artist



***Photographs Not Taken (I-277*), 2022**
Engraved wood panel, wood finish, car oil
Courtesy of the artist

Azim’s practice is grounded in her close engagement with photography and photographic archives. In her series *Photographs Not Taken*, Azim examines how representation in photography is shaped, performed, and recorded in familial and institutional archives. Azim inscribes brief narratives inspired by her family's migration from South Carolina to New York onto the wooden panels, as well as narratives from her recent experiences traveling through the American South. Written from the perspective of a revisited memory, each text moves fluidly through time, collapsing the past and present, encouraging the viewer to conjure multiple images and speculate on details left unwritten. This artist's call to speculation is intentional; it draws attention to the ways people evade documentation or are deliberately excluded from the photographer’s frame, as well as the failure of photography to represent histories not confined to a single perspective or point in time.