

AML SPACE This Land

exhibition essay by Faith J. McKinnie

A socially distant, emotionally present, Residence in Place project by Sydney Acosta

Since the 19th century, the American landscape tradition has been expressive of this vast and permanent space of place and time. It is a site of discovery, exploration, settlement, and freedom. Exploring the history of American landscape painting in relation to her own memories within the American justice system, Sydney Acosta uses her interior and exterior landscapes as sites of recollection and regeneration. The sites presented in this exhibition are from personal moments between people and objects. Acosta intends for these moments to live on, in This Land.

The Money Trees, aptly titled \$500000 (white brown and green), \$50000 (green and silver), \$500000 (tree in blue), and \$50000 (purple tree), are symbols of protection. Closely cropped and reclaimed to a space of abundance on the canvas. The abundance from the money trees is aspirational as individual and generational wealth remains unattainable for many Americans. Acosta's fast and expressive touches of oil paint on canvas substantiate the memory of her brother's insurmountable bail amount, \$50,000. These reflections form the memory of a shared American landscape.

The Love Letter Box is a carefully drawn design for a sculpture. It is documented in Acosta's personal sketchbook along with her botanical drawings, butterfly stickers and handwritten notes. The Love Letter Box will be constructed to contain two sets of love letters shared between the artist and her brother. The first set of letters are re-writings. Acosta traverses a terrain of memories to recreate each of the letters. The daily accounts, memories, poetry, pleas and drawings shared between 2006 and 2011 were all stolen by the carceral system upon his release. The second set of letters are written in the present. The letters are sealed, stamped, and placed into the Love Letter Box surrounded by two-inch thick plexiglass creating a condition of silence and a safe space for the memories to be confined to.

Acosta's interior landscapes draw from particular memories of the familial. The act of expelling them back into the world again is her reclamation of space. Futon, Horse, and Borrachero are interior spaces of reflection, landscapes that Acosta had to locate to rebuild. As each viewer finds themselves in the landscape of Acosta's work, we are reminded of an American justice system that does not represent the free pastoral scenes that Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School celebrated. That vast and everlasting land was stolen from the indigenous that occupied it and denied the enslaved people that built it. And as we publicly outcry to defund the police and end mass incarceration, we join Acosta in reimagining our memories because this American landscape was made for you and me.

Sydney Acosta (born 1987) grew up in Texas, the Yanaguana lands, studied at San Antonio College, received a BA in 2015 from California State University, Sacramento and will graduate with her MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in June 2021. She lives and works in Los Angeles, acknowledging the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar. Please direct requests for contact and inquiries to artmusiclitspace@gmail.com

AxiS Gallery Sacramento

16th National Juried Exhibition

Juror: Faith J. McKinnie

August 6th - 29th, 2021

Between These Moments

On June 15, 2021, our 15-month COVID-19 public health restrictions, mandates, and bans came to an end in California, placing us between these moments of remembering the loss, despondency, and disparate impacts this pandemic had on communities of color while looking forward to an anti-racist future alongside the joys of reconnecting with survived loved ones and abandoned landscapes. This exhibition proposes that we take up space between these moments, sitting in intentional solitude through reflection, deliberation, connection, and imagination.

On the very same day of California's reopening, I found myself making the final selections for this exhibition, positing me alone between these moments of looking back on the pandemic and looking forward into the future. The peri and post-COVID transition between Liz Brozell's "Urban Mom" to "Looking for Work" to Mariet Braakman's abstracted landscapes in "The Void in the Unknown #4 and #7" and each of the contemplative figurations were all clear and present moments of reflection for me. Ernest Regua's "In Between" is a visual representation of what the space between these moments feels like.

When we understand our past, going back to "normal" is not an option, and the work presented in this exhibition insists that we reflect and reimagine. Through figuration, abstraction, sculpture, and film, you will find yourself between these moments of the past and the future, where our presence is required.



Slice: A Juried Exhibit of Regional Art

Juror: Faith J. McKinnie

July 6 - August 19, 2021

These are the moments amid and proceeding a global pandemic. My own personal moments of rumination and reunification heavily influenced the selection of works presented in this exhibition. These thirty objects insisted on my presence in an imagined and psychological landscape, a place outside, but deep within. As we all begin to wander through reconnection, may we never forget the terrain that we traversed, the people we've lost and the landscapes forgotten. This exhibition presents our cycle of existence.

Reminiscent of a dream that we all have had, a familiar place that we have yet been. From portraits to abstracted landscapes, found objects, drawings and photographs. Look around and find yourself within the works, with the artists, during a year of great despair but now through a lens of profound hope and repair. I hope that this is a place where we all continue to reside, moving forward but always looking back.



Changing The Landscape

curated by Faith J. McKinnie

September 2 - October 2, 2022

From the 19th-century Hudson River School of painting to Sacramento's own highly endorsed genre of Landscape Art, the idyllic, romanticized, abstracted, and representational works are oftentimes void of human connection or consequences. Changing The Landscape deliberates on our impact on the contemporary landscape, through concept, representation, and materiality these Sacramento-based artists present an alternative expression, challenging the viewer to reconsider how we regard the revered uninterrupted landscape.

In early 2022 the Yellow Brick Group released season 3 of "Dropping Pins" creating a campaign acknowledging the historical importance of Japantown, an Asian-American downtown community destroyed during the mid-twentieth century for the development of Capitol Mall in Sacramento which is located near the site of this exhibition at Twisted Track Gallery and of YBG's upcoming and highly anticipated Our Street NGT MKT on R street in Sacramento.

This exhibition is a collaboration between
Yellow Brick Group x Twisted Track Gallery x curator Faith J. McKinnie