

# *A Sieve for Infinity*

May 21 - August 20, 2022

/ 1150 25th St, Building B San Francisco, CA 94107  
Open Thursday - Saturday, 11am-6pm

Jovencio de la Paz / Yeni Mao / Analia Saban

Curated by Astria Suparak



The works gathered together in *A Sieve for Infinity* abstract, fragment, and accumulate: A murmuration of paint drops, a trussing of horsehide and metal, a tapestry chronicling genesis and apocalypse.

The artists selected for the exhibition test materials and technology, both traditional and modern, incorporating handcrafted and industrial production. Analia Saban extends a lineage of conceptual art. Yeni Mao breaks camp from a modernist architectural practice. Jovencio de la Paz blurs the line between creativity and computation.

The loom is one of the precursors to modern computing technology, and the singular history of the Institute for Advanced Study computer is a starting point for Jovencio de la Paz's series *Bionumeric Organisms*, produced on a digital loom. Employed to calculate ballistics for American nuclear weapons in the 1940s, the IAS computer was subsequently used to model how single-celled organisms evolve and survive disaster. Adapting software from the latter program, de la Paz visualizes the self-generating patterns of growth and decay through textiles. And to construct the *Didderen* series, the artist gave a computer "vast fields of unweavable information"<sup>1</sup> which de la Paz's software interpreted as errors and tried to fix, filling in the gaps

algorithmically. The result of both bodies of work is dense textile abstractions that are collaborations between the artist and the computer.

While de la Paz obfuscates the distinction between maker and tool, Analia Saban subverts the relationship between material and surface. In her *Flare Up* series, the artist pushes paint through the back of stretched linen canvases. Depending on the pressure applied, the works look like a scattering of beads across a surface, Ben-Day dots of an abstract expressionist comic book, or an inky morass seething through a threadbare screen. Part of her long investigation into art-making processes, materials, and art historical traditions, the paintings are orchestrated unpredictability. "I do think a lot of my work has to do with destruction but also fixing things, or trying to weave things – or keep things – together," Saban said in a *New York Times* interview in 2017,<sup>2</sup> while recalling the impact the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy, located around the corner of her elementary school in Buenos Aires, had on her.

Departing from the "dogma of architectural modernism"<sup>3</sup> he was steeped in during the early part of his career, Yeni Mao considers how architecture holds memory and emotions. With *fig 25.8 automatic*, Mao connects spiritually with another builder in his family: his grandfather, who was part of a Chinese immigrant community in Borneo. During World War II, his grandfather's village was occupied by Imperial Japanese forces and the family fled to shelter with the Bidayuh, their allies and the Indigenous people of the region. After returning to the destroyed village, the grandfather and fellow villagers dismantled the still-standing schoolhouse piece by piece and reassembled it in another location allocated by the Malaysian government. Mao's kinetic sculpture lives within this cycle of fracturing and healing (differently, imperfectly), which also speaks to generational trauma, immigration, and dislocation. For this exhibition, Mao will unveil a new suspended sculpture.

Taken all together, the works in *A Sieve for Infinity* encourage shifting perspectives and moving forward – with clarity around the past – generating new possibilities. The materials here have agency, and a well of intensity bubbles under a veneer of restraint. This is a controlled violence: creation out of destruction, an aesthetic of resilience.

- Astria Suparak

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Jovencio de la Paz, Astria Suparak, July 19, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> "[An Artist at Home on the Fault Lines](#)," Jori Finkel, *The New York Times*, June 30, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Yeni Mao, Astria Suparak, March 22, 2022.

Image: Jovencio de la Paz, *Didderen 3.0*, 2020, TC2 Handwoven textiles; cotton, 16 x 40 in

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*A Sieve for Infinity*, curated by Astria Suparak, is the sixth in a series of exhibitions at /, each organized by an independent Bay Area-based curator. A commissioned essay by writer and curator Kim Nguyen will accompany the exhibition.

**Jovencio de la Paz** is an artist, weaver, and educator. Their current work explores the intersecting histories of weaving and modern computers. De la Paz works to find relationships between concerns of language, embodiment, pattern, and code with broad concerns of ancient technology, speculative futures, and the phenomenon of emergence. They are currently Assistant Professor and Curricular Head of Fibers at the University of Oregon, and in 2022, they were awarded the prestigious United States Artists Fellowship for significant contributions to the field of weaving.

**Yeni Mao's** sculptural practice engages in issues of fragmentation through equations of the body and architecture, pitting the physical and psychological properties of restraint, domination and order against the chaos of the visceral human condition. Mao received a BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and subsequently trained in foundry work in California and the architectural industries of New York. Born in 1971 in Guelph, Canada, Mao lives and works in Mexico City.

**Analia Saban** dissects and reconfigures traditional notions of painting, often using the medium of paint as the subject itself. Born in 1980 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Saban currently lives and works in Los Angeles. She received a BFA in Visual Arts from Loyola University in New Orleans in 2001, followed by an MFA in New Genres at the University of California in Los Angeles in 2005. Saban's works are represented in the collections of the Hammer Museum at UCLA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Centre Pompidou in Paris, and Fundación Proa in Buenos Aires, among others.

**Astria Suparak** is an artist and curator based in Oakland, California. Recently, her creative projects have been exhibited and performed at MoMA, ICA LA, The Walker Art Center, The Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, and as part of the For Freedoms billboard series. Suparak has curated for art institutions and festivals including The Liverpool Biennial, Museo Rufino Tamayo, The Kitchen, Eyebeam, MoMA PS1, and Expo Chicago.

**Kim Nguyen** is a writer and curator based in San Francisco. She has curated exhibitions, publications, and programs with a wide range of artists, including recent projects with Maia Cruz Palileo, Jeffrey Gibson, Hồng-Ân Truong, Cinthia Marcelle, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Lorraine O'Grady, Akosua Adoma Owusu, and Abbas Akhavan, and has written texts on Divya Mehra, Alex Da Corte, and Ken Lum, among others. She is completing her first collection of writings—a series of texts on alienation, art, and the long goodbye.

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/ is a nonprofit visual art space founded in 2018 to advance and promote the expanding field of contemporary art in San Francisco through exhibitions, publications, and public programming.