

Notes on Cultural Evidence

January 14 - July 15, 2023

Opening Reception: January 14, 5 to 8pm

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

Sholeh Asgary / Cristine Blanco / Viviana Carlos / Cathy Lu

Curated by PJ Gubatina Policarpio

Everywhere
they go
they plant

their garden
of
bitter melon

— excerpt from "Plantings" by Catalina Cariaga (published in *Cultural Evidence*, 1999)

Notes on Cultural Evidence is a multidisciplinary exhibition and reading room anchored in the out-of-print but influential poetry collection *Cultural Evidence* by Oakland-based Filipina American poet Catalina Cariaga. Published in 1999 by Subpress Collective, *Cultural Evidence* is considered a milestone work of diasporic feminist poetics.

Catalina Cariaga's thoughtful, layered and many-voiced writing serves as the point of departure for new site-specific installations by four Bay Area-based artists—Cathy Lu, Cristine Blanco, Sholeh Asgary, and Viviana Carlos—that engage with the residues of memory, migration, survival, regeneration, and revolution through intimate gestures of collectivity and care that unfold with the passage of time.

Collected in the library are books, archival materials, and ephemera that reflect on the evolving and ever-shifting politics of cultural identity and its traces. Among these materials are texts selected by the artists that inform their creative practices, worldviews, and daily lives. During the exhibition, the library reading room will be activated as a site of learning, research, and collaboration through a series of readings, workshops, and gatherings.

— PJ Gubatina Policarpio

Notes on Cultural Evidence is curated by PJ Gubatina Policarpio and is the first in a series of six-month exhibitions and projects that will take place in the / library, each organized by Bay Area-based guest curators and artists with longer-term, archive-, research-, and community-based practices. *Notes on Cultural Evidence* will be accompanied by a commissioned essay by Berkeley-based author and historian Catherine Ceniza Choy.

Catalina Cariaga is an American poet and the author of *Cultural Evidence* (Subpress Collective, 1999), which won a PEN Open Book Award. She has an MFA from San Francisco State University. A contributing editor to Poetry Flash, A Literary Review, and Calendar for the West, she lives in Oakland, California, on unceded Ohlone land.

Sholeh Asgary is an Iranian-born interdisciplinary sound artist whose works implicate the viewer-participant in future mythological excavations, bridging large swathes of time and history through water, water clocks, crude oil, movement, light, imaging, voice, and sound. Featured in Art in America's 2022 "New Talent Issue," Asgary has received support from numerous foundations and residencies, including Headlands Center for the Arts, Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Berkeley Art Center, MASS MoCA, AROS Kunstmuseum, UCLA ArtSci, and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts.

Viviana Martinez Carlos is a transdisciplinary artist born and raised in Mexico and currently based in San Francisco. Her work is located at the intersection of multi-media installation, artist book, research, and writing and redefines and challenges traditional conventions of uprooting, normative femininity, and grief. She received her BA from the University of Guanajuato, Mexico, and completed the continuing education program in Art Anthropology at the Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology in Mexico City. She has exhibited her work across California, Mexico, and Europe and is currently a bilingual teaching artist at the Museum of African Diaspora and BAMPFA.

Cristine Blanco is an interdisciplinary artist who works in painting, sculpture and installation. Her works take environmental injustices, the precarity of resources, and lineage as her starting point. Her labor intensive practice combines material and weight to explore both tension and care. Blanco holds an MFA in Studio Art from Mills College. She has exhibited works at Alternative Space LOOP in Seoul, Korea, SF Arts Commission Main Gallery, Berkeley Art Center, Kala Art Institute, and SOMArts Cultural Center.

Cathy Lu is a ceramics-based artist that manipulates traditional Chinese art imagery and presentation as a way to deconstruct the assumptions we have about Chinese American identity and cultural authenticity. She received her MFA from the SFAI, and her BA & BFA from Tufts University. She has participated in artist in residence programs at Root Division, Recology SF, and Archie Bray, MT. Her work has been exhibited at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Johansson Projects, Aggregate Space, Jessica Silverman Gallery, Berkeley Art Center and the Chinese Culture Center San Francisco. She is a

2023 SECA Art Awardee, 2019 Asian Cultural Council/ Beijing Contemporary Art Foundation Fellow and a 2020 NCECA Emerging Artist. She currently teaches at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University.

PJ Gubatina Policarpio is an educator, curator, and community organizer. He has organized exhibitions and programs in San Francisco, New York, and internationally including *Notes for Tomorrow* (Independent Curators International, 2021-Present), *Tarsal by Metatarsal* (Headlands Center for the Arts, 2021), *Solidarity Struggle Victory* (Southern Exposure, 2019), and *Rally: Queer Art and Activism Now* (Dixon Place, 2017). PJ is co-founder of Pilipinx American Library (PAL), an itinerant library and programming platform dedicated to diasporic Filipinx perspectives. His publications are in the collection of the Thomas J. Watson Library at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Born in the Philippines, PJ lives and works between San Francisco and New York City.

Catherine Ceniza Choy is an Asian American historian and ethnic studies scholar. She is the author of the books *Asian American Histories of the United States* (Beacon Press, 2022), *Global Families: A History of Asian International Adoption in America* (NYU Press, 2013), and *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Duke University Press, 2003), and a professor of ethnic studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

/ 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.