

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

BERNAL'S VIBRANT UNDERCURRENT OF ART VALERIE SOE & ISABELLE THUY PELAUD

The Asian American Women Artists Association (AAWAA) and Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center (APICC) join forces to present the politically charged, high impact exhibition "undercurrents & The Quest for Space for the United States of Asian American Festival. Opens May 2 and continues through May 25 at SOMArts Cultural Center.

Two Bernal residents, Valerie Soe and Isabelle Thuy Pelaud will show their work. Here's what they had to say to *The New Bernal Journal* (NBJ).

NBJ: Who/what has influenced your art?

Valerie Soe: I make experimental and documentary films so I've got a lot of influences. I'm mostly interested in artwork and films that comment on society or social issues, although I also love a good musical! I also blog about art and culture at beyondasiaphilia.com <<http://beyondasiaphilia.com>>, so you can go there to see the kind of things I gravitate toward.

Isabelle Thuy Pelaud: I am interested in applying abstract concepts visually. I like many of the works AAWAA promotes because they resonate with me. Something about hybrid forms, the mixing of influences and the idea that everyone can make art. I personally love the works of Ruth Asawa, because it is deeply personal, abstract and explores materials and light in ways that transcend borders.



Artist Isabelle Thuy Pelaud stands in front of one of her art installations.

Cultural Center in May.

I am also working on an art installation piece about cause and effect.

My next big project will be a book of prose poems that are both personal and historical. I will then make a video that uses the poems, photographs, archival images, artworks, computer animation, moving images and music.

NBJ: One final question. What brought you to Bernal?

Valerie Soe: I've lived here since the early 90s and I've always liked the small-town within the big city aspect of Bernal. Since I've lived here so long I usually see someone I know when I walk up Cortland to the grocery store or the library.

Isabelle Thuy Pelaud: This was my favorite neighborhood in the city and I feel extremely blessed to be able to live here. I get to live in the city while still be surrounded by trees, parks and not too many cars. It has also more sun than in other parts of the city and it is close to work, and everything else. I love living here.

NBJ: Thank you both and success with "underCurrents and the Quest for Space" and your future projects.



Artist and filmmaker, Valerie Soe and a still from her film "The Chinese Gardens"



NBJ: You're both professors at SFSU. What impact does teaching have on your art?

Valerie Soe: Teaching is a great way for my work to stay fresh & relevant. Students are constantly making me question myself and my assumptions and my dialog with them always makes me stay on my toes. Plus they keep me more up-to-date with popular culture and trends, which I always need help with.

Isabelle Thuy Pelaud: I started to be more serious about creating art and showing it to a larger public when I started to teach a class on Asian American Women Literature and Art. I believe that it is much easier to critique than to create. As a teacher of Asian American women art, I wanted to be more familiar with not only the theories and issues surrounding the subject, but also the process of creating and exhibiting. I also wanted to become more involved with community organizing and help promote Asian American women artists, and serve as a link between academia and community.

NBJ: What advice do you have for emerging artists?

Valerie Soe: Although you should always make art about something you care about and know about, you should also try to make it significant to someone besides yourself. This could mean dealing with community issues, political issues, or activism. And make a lot of art, even if no one else sees it. Practice makes better, as they say.

Isabelle Thuy Pelaud: Make art a daily practice. Everything you do in daily life has a link with the world and aesthetic. Art is about constantly making small choices; it is a way of seeing and being that impacts your world and the world around you. Do not only work alone. Meet people who have similar passions. To be an artist does not mean you cannot develop other parts of yourself.

NBJ: Please give our readers a glimpse into your new projects.

Valerie Soe: I'm going to Istanbul in October for the Inter-Asian Connections IV conference, which will look at all kinds of Asian culture and politics. I'll be presenting a paper on Asian American artists who work online (what I call "open-source artwork") and who challenge the status quo.

I'm also in development for a documentary about the Expatriate Youth Summer Formosa Study Tour to Taiwan, aka the Chinese Love Boat, which is a summer abroad trip for Chinese American students that for a variety of reasons has a very long and interesting history. It's kind of notorious in the Chinese American community, in fact.

Isabelle Thuy Pelaud: I am finishing with two other women a triptych of experimental shorts negotiating the shifting terrain of historical and personal violence while confronting the three-fold of war, memory, and unwarranted masters. It is titled *she who has no master*. It will be shown at the Vietnamese International Film Festival in LA, and at AAWAA's undercurrents & the Quest for Space exhibition at SOMArts

"Undercurrents & The Quest for Space" opens on May 2, 2013 and continues through May 25, 2013, SOMArts Cultural Center, 934 Brannan Street, San Francisco

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 2, 2013, 5pm – 8 pm

Poetry Reading, Poetry underCurrents: Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 7pm – 8:30 pm

Panel Discussion: Saturday, May 25, 2013, 1pm -3pm

For more information about the exhibition, contact Asian American Women Artists Association www.aawaa.net and Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center www.apiculturalcenter.org

"just us"

youth summit

Our Moment

Our City

Our Community

Our Life

Our Movement

open mic

workshops

free food

@ balboa high school

1000 cayuga ave, san francisco, ca 94112

may 3rd 2013: 4pm - 7pm

For more information about the Just.Us. Youth Summit, please contact Natasha Gonzalez, Youth Development and Empowerment Coordinator, ngonzalez@bhnc.org, (415) 206-2140 x 139

Calling all Writers

want to see your work published in the NBJ?

Interested in the community? *New Bernal Journal* is looking for volunteer writers to cover stories about BHNC's core issues: affordable housing, health and public safety and immigrant rights. If interested, please send two (2) writing samples to nbj@bhnc.org.