#### **Juliana Kang Robinson: Artist Statement**

My current series of drawings, *Sea of Famine*, contemplates the manifestations of territorial and survival behaviors, and the divide between people, cultures, and nations created by those behaviors.

The *Sea of Famine* drawings began as my way of processing the historical events that have shaped North Korea, in particular the Great Famine of the 1990s. The West Sea Barrage is a system of dams built in the 1980's in North Korea intended to control flooding, improve ship traffic and boast of their engineering capabilities to the world. However, the raised water levels created by the dam led to the destruction of crucial farmland and is believed to have contributed to the Great Famine of the 1990s.

The bears in my drawings reference the Korean creation mythology, and the sea of bear bones, the undocumented number of lives lost in the Great Famine. This work can reference specifically the Great Famine in North Korea or more broadly the widening gap between developed nations and developing nations, the have and the have nots in the world.

### Manon Bogerd Wada: Artist Statement

During participation in Cynthia Tom's *A Place of Her Own* last Spring 2014, I began imagining the hungry ghosts of my family, which have been passed down and continue to haunt me, akin to a form of inheritance. In attempts to break and reconcile this samsara, I have been exploring the roots of depression and addiction as I have come in contact with it. Specifically, I have been reflecting on my relationship to alcohol on a personal level, as having absorbed the repercussions from close contact with a family member, as well as another individual dealing with this complex disease, and in a larger picture of society. This piece serves to pair imagery with a feeling of drowning in a substance desired, which continuously runs empty and dry. In this sense, addiction as a metaphor for the insatiable, hungry ghosts that take hold of living beings. The purpose of this piece is not to make a statement about alcohol or alcoholism, but rather a means to understand, a process of healing by naming it with a visual representation, and to purge or rather, let go of it.

## Samantha Chundur: Artist Statement

Having desires is an integral part of being human. While many are individual in nature, a majority of these desires are a reflection of our collective needs and the state of our society. Our individual need for a better economic and social position for ourselves and our families is a direct result of the disparities that exist in our society at large. The piece 'Manika (Ruby)' is inspired by the disparities, contrasts and the ghosts of our unresolved economic and social struggles that are prevalent in society today.

Though a majority of our desires stem from the state of our society, many of our individual needs are rooted in greed for material wealth. The traditional concept of 'hungry ghosts' is therefore fascinating. The brief for the exhibition refers to them roaming 'the earth burdened by unmet needs, insatiable hungers, and intense desires often for a particular substance or object'. I believe this concept is applicable to not just the dead but to the living as well; it's our lost spirits in the elusive quest for material wealth. We need to realize that this material quest is an illusion and instead focus our energies towards resolving our collective need for a more harmonious and all-encompassing society. This serves as the inspiration for the piece 'Jagat (Cosmos)'.

#### **Pallavi Sharma: Artist Statement**

The work is about dream state/ a trans, where I do self-taking which is therapeutic as it addresses the deep seeded issues which never gets vent in awaken state. This performance will give me and the viewers a chance to interact, and intersect with each other in a liminal space. For this, I will create a skirt, which will have multiple openings for people to come and occupy. I will be seated and murmuring in one of the openings and will be changing my place time to time with extempore acts. The duration of the performance should be 10- 15 minutes (depending on the audience participation). This performance work is meant for intimate audience as a live installation in which audience members are free to participate if they choose.

#### Nicholas Oh: Artist Statement

As an artist I aim to create artwork that is strong both visually and conceptually. Much of my work derives from my multicultural perspective as an Asian American who is dealing with social and political issues in America. Through my artwork I want to show my viewers some of the cruelties of racism and some of the beauties of multiculturalism. My art is embedded with social and political messages in order to draw attention and for my ideas to have an impact. I use images that often clash brutal reality with visually pleasing work. I want to provoke and challenge the audience to question their own ideas, while telling them my Asian American stories.

## **Vida Kuang: Artist Statement**

Through a string of consciousness narration, *Home Is* seeks to unravel and deconstruct my sense of belongingness across time and space. Like a hungry ghost, figments of my childhood are uprooted against the ongoing changes that persist in my neighborhood. Each moment captured in the video contains a fragment of the daily senses I remember from my childhood: some still present, while others obstructed. I hope this piece will contribute to a critical dialogue on how we can re-imagine community and belongingness.

# **Arlene Biala: Artist Statement**

My work tends to focus on the experiences, relationships between physical and spiritual beings. I am inspired by the "unnamed ghosts that stalk the territories" (~Juan Felipe Herrera), whether in our minds, dreams, physical worlds . . . and the spaces in between.

#### **Diana Li: Artist Statement**

My work addresses concepts dealing with my gender, cultural and ethnic identity. While much of my practice confronts issues pertaining to gender customs such as in Finger Running, I also explore memories of home across generations in *Distant Lullabies*. With a Chinese Peruvian American background, I am also focused on exploring the degrees of authenticity in relationship to my personal background, a theme I use for Token. These pieces highlight hauntings of what it means to be intimate, to forget a song my mother taught me, and to understand my relationship to my past. At the same time, I intend to communicate a critical stance on these topics that challenge the way we view and normalize race, gender, class and sexuality.

## **Karen Nagano: Artist Statement**

In my *Hungry Ghost/Oni* series of mixed medium paintings, I extend an openness of heart, mind and hand to the repressed, neglected, cast-out aspects of myself which haunt the netherworld between wake and sleep. For many years, I reacted to the energies of this Shadow Self as enemies to my happiness and well-being. As I began to extend compassion to myself and to all the energies within me, the netherworld that I had feared and resisted began to give form to itself. Through the expression of these energies, I discovered that rather than undermine or destroy happiness and well-being, given freedom and the acceptance to exist, a surge of energy and life and creativity was released. I felt whole and happy.

In addition to the sense of wholeness and heightened sense of aliveness and creativity, the gifts of the *Hungry Ghost/Oni* work include the connection and community it brings. People have said they feel healing after viewing my *Hungry Ghosts*. They feel less alone. They feel strengthened and more buoyant. They like the visual inventiveness and the ability to see something scary and also experience amusement and light-heartedness. I'm very grateful for those responses. The meaning and effect the work gives to others provides a sense of completeness that is beyond words.

### **Grace Jahng Lee: Artist Statement**

Born stateless in Seoul and raised on military bases across four continents, I have been haunted by the erasure of my homeland and history. As a Korean immigrant woman, the significance of individual and collective struggles to reconcile traumatic histories in our culture has been deeply ingrained. My writing reflects upon themes of haunting histories of war, intergenerational trauma resulting from a nation divided into two, fragmented lives, displacement, and memory. My poems examine the theme of hungry ghosts, haunting immigrant bodies that carry the trauma of historical struggles with their restless nature and insatiable quest to occupy and embody the immigrant body.

#### **Genevieve O'Brien: Artist Statement**

In a global capitalist economy, branding is everything. For luxury brands the scarcity of the product creates the inflated value. This conceptual performance documents my journey over the course of three days through the 12 districts of Ho Chi Minh City, capturing the manifestation of capitalism's collapse in the changing economy of Vietnam. I chose to travel through the city on the back of a motorbike, representing modernity. In a mixed economy, where sartorial choice is limited, brand names are seen for their value and, therefore, replicated so as to capitalize on these brand names and luxury ideals. In turn, this copying, replication, and knock-off industry then dilutes the value of the luxury brands. I chose to take pictures only from the back to highlight what is "behind" the reality of the global capital luxury fashion industry, many of the goods produced in the global south and Southeast Asia. These images of Saigon today illustrate the lowest end of the sartorial stratification through the failed replication of luxury brand names. Images in this series also represent a semiotic language where the humor and irony are only legible to a Western gaze, one replete with the complex context of US and Vietnamese socio-political relationships over time.

For me the idea of *Hungry Ghosts* invokes the spectre of US military involvement in Vietnam in what Vietnamese call the "American War". This project is demonstrative of transnational global capitalism's failure 30 years in the shadow of US involvement in Vietnam.

### **Kaitlynn Redell: Artist Statement**

I explore the visualization of identity in my work using photography, drawing, collage and video. I am concerned with race and gender in relation to the body and how the body becomes codified within these socially constructed categorizations. More specifically I am interested in in-betweenness and how "unidentifiable" bodies—that do not identify with standard categories—negotiate identity.

In the "Supporting as Herself" series I explore how film stills of Anna May Wong—the 1920s Chinese American actress—carry a sense of historical weight and serve as a contested foundation for my own understanding of identity. The manipulated representation of her public image, the stereotypical roles she played, and my proximity to her birthplace (my current studio is less than a mile from Chinatown, Los Angeles) have created an aura that haunts me to the core. I see Wong as a lynchpin for what it means to be both American and foreign—"Othered"—simultaneously.

Through performative mimicking, photography, collage and drawing I explore the ways in which Wong presented/performed race and gender. I created a series of figurative collages and drawings using publicity stills of Wong and images of myself mimicking her poses. I am interested in how my figurative collages/drawings reference Wong's image as a starting point, but become amorphous bodies engaged in their own language.

#### **Linda Shiue: Artist Statement**

Linda Shiue is a curious explorer of food+travel+culture who believes in the healing power of food. The kitchen is her studio and the vast world of spices, her palette. She was born to Taiwanese immigrants in Lexington, Kentucky, and grew up in small towns in Rhode Island and Long Island, New York, where she and her family were the only Asians in town. Despite her homogenous surroundings, because of her parents' jobs, she was exposed to a steady and ever-changing stream of people from around the world, which piqued her curiosity. A trip to San Francisco at age 17 showed her the beauty of living in a place where there were others like herself, as well as from everywhere else, and she made it her goal to eventually settle here. Ten years later, she moved to San Francisco with her multicultural Trinidadian husband, and hasn't looked back. She continues to apply what she learned an anthropology student at Brown University by traveling whenever possible, exploring cultures through their markets and kitchens. There's no better way to get to know a person and culture than by breaking bread, or roti, or sharing a bowl of rice or noodles. She invites you to explore global tastes with her at The Doctor's Spicebox cooking classes on the San Francisco Peninsula.

### **KaYan Cheung: Artist Statement**

I consider myself a storyteller, somebody that looks for stories of the people who hold our families and communities together across continents and decades. I work as a visual storyteller because of my personal relationship to the comics form. Growing up as a young immigrant, visual storytelling was uniquely accessible to me, and I was inspired by the way ordinary people used the medium to challenge mainstream culture and dominant narratives. I hope to make visible stories that are often hidden, to create a canvas of our diaspora's community history.

'Hungry ghosts' are also a way that the hidden or repressed stories of our community come to life, a form of collective memory or connection to our ancestors. We may experience this as a haunting, an anxiety, or an unsettling of our everyday. But hungry ghosts are also productive in the way that all uncovered and uncomfortable truths are, as they call us to forms of action.

"Dear Brother" imagines the work of hungry ghosts across lines of race, gender, and generation. I spent eight years doing labor and community organizing; the comic examines what is sometimes the most difficult kind of organizing -- organizing family members. Through the story of a sister and brother, it thinks about many of the questions that recent events have raised for me: How are Asian American masculinities defined? Who benefits from systemic racial violence? What does solidarity between people of color look like? What are we doing to mentor the next generation?

Like ghosts, our movements connect us across time and space. From the anti-displacement struggles of the International Hotel, to the fight for racial justice in the streets of Ferguson, we are called to remember and then act.

# Marlene Iyemura: Artist Statement

As a personal reflection on World War II and the Japanese internment, my most recent art practice is primarily an examination of race relations in the United States and the lasting impact of the war's anti-Japanese prejudice. The internment resulted in a legacy of racism that has continued to fuel two generations of Japanese people to Americanize (read: whiten) their cultural identifiers and practices. Many children of Asian American descent are forced into a middle ground – never belonging completely in any one community. I am not Japanese. I am not American. I am both and neither at the same time.

To All Persons functions as a memorial for the youths that were interned during WWII. The sculpture is a juxtaposition of Executive Order 9066 posters and colorful origami balloons spilling out from a luggage case. Embodying an air of silent reverence, the piece combines a historical symbol of persecution with a cultural object instilled with childhood exuberance.

My interest in *Hungry Ghosts* stems from an appetite for collective processing of historical trauma. I desire to build a verbal and visual dialog with other Asian artists and Asian Americans about our intersectional histories and lived experiences. Additionally, I would like my work to be a stepping off point for fellow Japanese American youth to analyze the current atmosphere of racial tensions in the United States. Asian involvement in the radical dialogs popping up across the nation about race and institutionalized oppression is needed for wide reaching changes to be made in American society's overall treatment of people of color.