The Resistant Gesture

The
Resistant Gesture

Axis Gallery Sacramento, California
November 29 - December 22

Sydney Acosta
Caiti Chan
Jodi Connelly
Elizabeth Cord
Rachel Deane
Hea-Mi Kim
Amy Nathan
Holly Smith

Merriam-Webster defines Resist as the ability "to withstand the force or effect of." In today's society of American culture it can be argued that there are many opportunities to rebuff an undesireable force. Though there is no firm consensus on this issue, there is a state of survey and activity across the globe, where previous ways of thinking are being processed and re-imagined. Here at home there is less consensus on basic and fundamental issues.

The artists in this exhibition have powerful, nuanced and emergent voices. In a market where there are many moments - though fraught with complications - to resist an exerting force, they are here; cultivating a space of identity, solidarity and grace. Recently, in noting forces in the Art World and methods on how to "withstand," activists and artists have protested the role of Warren B. Kanders as the Whitney Museum of Art's (NY), Board Vice Chairman. They cited his defense manufacturing company, Safariland, and its production of tear-gas canisters used against asylum seekers at the U.S./Mexico border. This may have influenced his resignation.

The work included in The Resistant Gesture is full of intention, discovery and affirmation, similar to currents vibrating nationally and globally in the effort to withstand a force or effect. The artists articulate keen ideas with material fluency, visual resonance and cultural reflection. This is a most profound expression of what is both sensitive and assertive, and how shifts in thinking present the critical vision in the position of authorship.

The Resistant Gesture encompasses many forms, media and methods of demarcation. It is by a subtle stroke, a tender indication or by placing roles of authority in humorous indignation, that new voices precede new ways of thinking. And, how the act of making itself becomes oppositional to an ordinary experience.

Curator: Tavarus Blackmon

Sydney Acosta

Sydney Acosta is a visual artist working primarily in painting and drawing.

Sydney Acosta (born 1987) lives and works in Los Angeles,CA. She grew up in Texas. Acosta received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2015 from California State University, Sacramento, Sacramento, CA and at present is a graduate student at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Muse, Charcoal on paper, 30 x 41 inches, 2019, Photo by Jayna Finucane

Pleasure Painting, Oil on panel, 60 x 48 inches, 2019, Photo by Jayna Finucane

Everything happens very slowly. The earth turns. The ground turns. Swarms. And bricks breaking, swelling really. Radial love hard as gravel. A bird woman at rest, masturbating at the bus stop, in transit.

Caiti Chan

My art practice is process driven, focusing on the paint's materiality, and experimenting with other materials that cause various reactions on the surface. I am constantly discovering new mediums to use in my work, but the common thread to the pigments I use are that they are water soluble and can layer multiple times. I currently use isopropyl alcohol, which has a chemically reactive quality when it contacts water based paints. Some other processes include plastic sheeting used to imprint texture, which is later removed in order to leave its mark. In order to regain and reclaim control over the painting, it is crucial to also edit by hand via brush, pen, or pencil. While I paint, I reflect on change in my life. Though it is not specifically depicted, it is imbued by the process of making. My goal is to use abstraction as a conversation starter, to keep the viewer searching, and to discover what we have in common. This causes us to discover how each person's human experience can be shared, and show communion and relationship.

Current work has involved dealing with the death of my father. I have taken time this past year to slow down and deal with the process of grief. With that, a lot of time had been spent out of the studio reflecting on the next steps to take in my painting process. In the studio post loss, I had felt such a repulsion to make work. I had felt the need to try to understand my situation before approaching paint. My piece, Everything, all at once, without you, was the first painting I had done after visiting my father's family in Singapore months after his death. The bittersweet occasion, being in my father's hometown, and meeting family I had not seen most of my life brought about so many mixed emotions. I felt feelings of excitement, comfort, and relief while I was still dealing with deep despair of sudden loss. The year following has revealed to me the way grief can manifest: incomprehensible, and a constant battle with unfamiliarity. I want my paintings and the process of dealing with irreversible loss to attract the viewer and share something personal that, in some way, we can all relate too.

Caiti Chan is a Sacramento, born and raised artist. She received her BA and MA at Sacramento State University and is a current art resident at Verge Center for the Arts. Her paintings are process driven and involve experimentation with paint and other materials to create large atmospheric abstractions.

While I paint, I reflect on change in my life... I want my paintings and the process of dealing with irreversible loss to attract the viewer and share something..

When our Souls Leave, Acrylic, ink, alcohol, and pen on canvas, 40 x 30 inches, 2019

Everything, all at once, without you, Acrylic, watercolor, ink, alcohol, pen, and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 44 inches, 2019

Jodi Connelly

My work explores the interstices between my internal terrain and the world around me. It is an index of imprints, created either by direct interactions with the landscape or the use of the body as sculptural material. In this series of photographs, I reshape my body in response to the attitudes that have partially formedmy identity as a woman. From a very young age, girls are instructed to be "nice", to tolerate comments and actions that make one burn with an unsettled feeling of something just within the penumbra of rage; a discomfort that we are led to believe is our fault, a source of shame. Women have been trained not to touch this sensation, to suppress it, to conform, to tolerate, to smile. Through the process of tightly wrapping thread around myself, I allow the pain of this action to become a physical acknowledgement of this quiet anger. Each distortion allows me to reclaim my body as my own, exhuming the internalized violence that has made me unrecognizable to myself.

Jodi Connelly's work investigates the complexities of the human relationship to nature and the environment. Through site-specific environmental interventions that include photographic documentation, sculpture and drawing, she explores issues of climate change and the effects migration and development have had on native ecosystems over the past 400 years. Her work is hand wrought and physical, in an attempt to create intimacy between herself and the land upon which she works. She completed her MFA in Art Studio at the University of California, Davis in 2018, where she received the Keister and Allen Prize for her project An Intervention in Space and Time, a year- long environmental intervention at the UC Davis McLaughlin Reserve. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Manetti Shrem Museum in Davis, CA, the Greenville Museum of Art and the Durham Art Guild in North Carolina. Ms. Connelly currently resides in Sacramento, California.

Untitled 3, Inkjet print on archival paper, 24 x 17 inches, 2019

Untitled 1, Inkjet print on archival paper, 24 x 16 inches, 2017,
Documented by Muzi Li Rowe

Each distortion allows me to reclaim my body as my own...

Elizabeth Cord

Universal experiences of transitions, growth and movement are central themes in my work. My hope is that by using fundamental shapes such as circles, cubes and spirals in combination with applied color theory that my work will convey a sense of an omnipresent unity within human experience. I use bright colors, patterns, lots of lines and abstracted figures as actors to create a visual world that references shapes and spaces of Celestial and cellular manifestation. With large and small systematic gestures I try to achieve both a dizzying optical effect and calming approach to process.

Elizabeth Cord is from Sacramento, California. She is currently in the Bachelors of Fine Art, in Studio Art, Program at California State University, Sacramento. She has exhibited in the CSUS Alumni Exhibition, the California State Fair, Fine Arts Competition, the Sacramento Fine Art Center's, Bold Expressions exhibit and held the solo exhibition, See You in the Morning, in the Witt Gallery at CSUS. She enjoys working with children in the community and believes strongly in art and creativity as powerful tools for learning.

Large Jefrey, Oil pastel on cardboard, 61 x 45 inches, 2016

Spiral Jefrey, Oil pastel and acrylic ink on watercolor paper, 45 x 45 inches, 2019

...transitions, growth and movement are central themes in my work.

Rachel Deane

In order to bear witness to the patriarchal structures of society and the subsequent effects on the contemporary female body, my work materializes trauma, shame, and healing processes. Installations, paintings, and textiles are used to tie together themes from art history and dating culture. I use storytelling as a basis for my work, connecting my own biographical narratives to stories found in the collective conscious, such as cinema, folklore, and mythology. Repetition and testimony are used to address, dispel, and heal from trauma. My labor-intensive hand is present in the ornamentation of each object and draws attention to the female labor involved in self-care. Immersive environments, hidden text, delicate materials, and complex compositions are used to encourage close inspection, reinforcing the importance of the viewer in my act of storytelling. Displayed individually each of my objects acts as a vessel that holds a visual or perceptual memory in the context of the particular moment of its making, allowing for the destruction of the shamed past-self. Displayed together as an installation, the combined objects define a larger moment in time conveying the labor involved in modern femininity.

Rachel was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. She holds a BFA in Painting and an MA in Art + Design Education from the Rhode Island School of Design, and an MFA in Art Studio from the University of California, Davis. She has been an artist in residence at the Chautauqua School of Art, the Vermont Studio Center, and the Wassaic Project. She has shown nationally in California, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Massachusetts, Florida, and Texas. Her work has been collected by the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art.

Dwelling Object (Are These Marks Really Freeing), Fluid acrylic, fabric, and embroidery floss on canvas, A-Frame, 10 x 13 inches, 2019

My labor-intensive hand is present in the ornamentation of each object and draws attention to the female labor involved in self-care.

Susanna's Harassment, Oil on Canvas, 32 x 38 inches, 2018

Dwelling Object (The Home I Had to Live In), Fluid acrylic, fabric, and embroidery floss on canvas, 63.5 x 77 inches, 2019

Hea-Mi Kim

My practice brings to light the discourse of otherness in conversation with South Korean Diasporic identity. I work through the conscious act of searching and saving web-based resources that resonate with moments of exclusivity whether its an overt act of racism or a microagression. By making videos from sourced material, I am using these accumulated materials to recite my own life experiences that reverberate these moments of a perceived other. Mainstream media attempts to represent reality, and these ruptures between life and artifice is why I am so drawn to sourcing online media. I attempt to unravel this tangled knot of existing associations our Western culture represents. I hope to reveal sexism, racism, and objectification through the raising of perplexing questions on narratives dealing with social hierarchy in the context of race and gender. My research process is akin to this idea of coercive mimeticism in which an individual feels the need to simulate their own ethnicity as a response to Western social pressure. Through research on case studies, mainstream media representations, source analysis, and real life experiences, I attempt to reveal the realities of living as a Korean woman in America. Due to growing up in a primarily white community, I was early on complicit with white nationalist social structures. My work responds to our hegemonic culture and the tensions that exist between assimilation, evoking one's own ethnicity, and combatting nationalist western ideologies.

Hea-Mi Kim is an artist working in video, installation, and sound. Her work informs power structures around systemic racism and gender roles inhibited by Western society. Her video, Are You Chinese? (2015), shown at Bronx Art Space combined snippets of films showing Asian women while those figures were redacted through manipulation. Born in Seattle, WA in 1993 but raised in the suburbs of Detroit, MI as a second generation Korean-American, she was early on exposed to otherness perpetuated by whiteness and gender performativity. Now recently moving to Los Angeles, she is exploring the nuances of her identity tied in with her parents' immigration from South Korea and living in Los Angeles as a Korean-American. She received her BFA in Studio Art in New York City from Parsons School of Design in 2017. She is now finishing up her MFA at the University of California Los Angeles specializing in the New Genres department.

I attempt to unravel this tangled knot of existing associations our Western culture represents.

Subjective Statistic (the european american respondents in this sample were less likely to date outside of their race while asian american respondents were more likely to date outside their race), Inkjet print and single channel audio, 2018

Yellow Bitches, Single-channel audio with subtitles, 2017

Amy Nathan

My sculptures begin with the act of applying pressure to images and language, cracking open their systems, making them tactile, and distending them into an expanded space. Made of adaptable modular forms, they employ tautness and slack, flexibility and rigidity, draping and propping up—simple machines with palpable physical properties. Putting ideas and materials through the wringer, taking-apart-and-putting-back-together has become my research and my practice. Through these processes I discover how chosen images or words operate, and communicate what is embedded or compressed within.

Amy Nathan is an artist based in Berkeley, California. Her work has recently been exhibited at CULT | Aimee Friberg Exhibitions, Art Toronto, Art Market San Francisco, the Seattle Art Fair, the Headlands Center for the Arts, Traywick Contemporary, and with the International Sculpture Center at the Pyramid Hill Museum. Nathan was a 2018-2019 Graduate Fellow at the Headlands Center for the Arts. She received her MFA from Mills College in 2018, and she is a co-director of Royal NoneSuch Gallery in Oakland, California. Her work has appeared in the New American Paintings and Sculpture Magazine.

Triple Navel, Pigmented silicone, flocking, insulation foam, wood, cardboard, epoxy clay, acrylic, 12.25 x 21 x 16 inches, 2018

Fish Hook, Plywood, canvas, flashe, and acrylic, 31 x 28.5 x 2 inches, 2018

Putting ideas and materials through the wringer, taking-apart-and-put-ting-back-together has become my research and my practice.

Holly Smith

The energy source for my practice stems from being a mother and my engagement with dot patterned tissue paper. The mother figure in the paintings is reduced, often to a torso, enabling a near equal division of communicative power between the figurative and dot patterned tissue paper. Beginning without sketches, using oil paint and oil sticks, I smear, push, and scrape. Simultaneously I gently apply fragile tissue paper, letting it tear and wrinkle on stretched canvas or wood panel. The exchanging and response of information between the paintings and myself are integral to the ideas presented and explored. There is an overall theme of conflicting relationships that may express multiplicity. The duality of participation lends to a sense of being between states, where ambiguity lives. In this state, ambivalence comes alive, and relationships among beauty, aggression, gracefulness, and rawness are exposed.

Holly Smith lives in Dixon, California with her partner and children. After receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree from California State University, Sacramento, in 2018, she went back to CSUS and is currently working as a graduate student.

Untitled, Oil paint, tissue paper, charcoal and graphite on wood panel
48 x 48 inches, 2019

Untitled, Oil paint, tissue paper, charcoal and graphite on wood panel
48 x 48 inches, 2019

The exchanging and response of information between the paintings and myself are integral to the ideas presented and explored. There is an overall theme of conflicting relationships that may express multiplicity.