

# ACOMP

## Transient Grounds

August 8 – September 11, 2021

Nolan Park, Building 6B  
Governors Island, NY



(Image: Claudia Peña Salinas, Untitled (rock II),  
Digital c-print, 12 x 8 inches, 2014)

Nobutaka Aozaki  
Christina Barrera  
Daniel Barragán  
Keiron de Nobriga  
Ignacio Gatica

Stefany Lazar  
Cole Lu  
André Magaña  
Cassandra Mayela  
Mariana Parisca

Xinan (Helen) Ran  
Edward Salas  
Claudia Peña Salinas  
Adrian Edgard Rivera  
Daesup Song

(NEW YORK, NY — July 15, 2021) — ACOMPI and NARS Foundation are pleased to present *Transient Grounds*, an exhibition that houses the histories embedded and preserved by immigrant, first-generation, and borderland artists whose work counters the gradual forces of cultural erosion. Sited within architectural and emotional fragments of a former home in Governors Island's Nolan Park, the works unravel experiences and psychologies of hybridity, double-consciousness, memory, and belonging. They reclaim identities against the historic and persisting realities of colonialism, militance, and environmental crises of the Island and the United States at large.

The exhibition of these fifteen artists' work is not organized by region, but rather through common themes of their experiences: cultural synchronicity, double consciousness, terrestrial memory, inherited trauma, and reshaped distance. Nobutaka Aozaki presents three works from his *Clocks for Immigrants* series, in which two hour hands tell the times of different countries or places simultaneously, portraits of "being in two places (two times) at once, the state of mind of immigrants."

A double consciousness emerges—across generations and borders—when living in a world with artifacts and iconography experienced not as referential symbols but as layered realities. Using both analog and digital fabrication to reinterpret traditions of production and replication, Adrian Edgard Rivera fabricates a massive, painted Aztec head to question cultural authenticity and admixture, colonial appropriation, and heritage commodification. Andre Magaña constructs a hybrid sculpture of El Chavo, from the Mexican television sitcom, rendered statuesque. Edward Salas' double-headed, ceramic jeep-donkey hybrid carries a vessel—referencing both pre-Colombian sculptures and contemporary car culture—suggesting mobility and customization as tools of identity formation. Daniel Barragán embeds handkerchief sculptures with pre-Colombian figures, 80s rock bands, and family photographs to evoke the histories of the agricultural labor struggles of his hometown on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Many immigrants are confronted with the skewed reality of the "American dream" in stark contrast to what they once perceived through media and television in their birth countries, bringing into question a new didacticism of identity and lived experience. Ignacio Gatica presents a multi-channel video installation inspired by the first hit song from De Kirusa, "Algo está pasando"—released in 1988, the year Gatica was born—in which the band members unplug TVs airing Milton Friedman's "Free To Choose," a series of propaganda footage exported from the US to Chile. After immigrating to the United States from Venezuela, Mariana Parisca embeds a video—in which she asks images of Simon Bolivar on the Venezuelan Bolivar to liberate us—into a bed-like structure, questioning the idea and irony of liberty in the Americas, as well as the false end to coloniality. Daesup Song recalls listening to rock music in his agricultural hometown in Korea through a military base antenna, from which he was able to pick up a radio signal; Song carves large architectural and emotional totems and creatures out of pink foam, a montage of materiality and layers of experimentation in which the object lies in a never-ending cycle of metamorphosis.

Cassandra Mayela has not returned to Venezuela since 2016. In the exhibition, she displays the personal clothing that she brought with her from her homeland alongside other pieces that have been with her during these seven years in a woven manner full of nostalgia, simultaneously

repurposing memories into an object that embodies the weight and space that reminders can occupy. Xinan (Helen) Ran presents a patchwork quilt and spatial collage that reads WIPE ME WITH A SPIT ON YOUR THUMB, imbued with distant notions of maternal care and the composite stitching together of images, feelings, and desires.

For many of these artists, the multi-compositional nature of the Earth sutures a metaphysical state of past, present, and future. Exhibited for the first time, Claudia Peña Salinas' photographs overlay found river stones onto family portraits, obscuring identities while neutralizing memories through travels in nature; viewers can fill in the stones as blank spaces for their own loved ones. Stefany Lazar creates sculptural replicas of family photo albums that she recently inherited after estrangement from their father, who took the images—of grandparents, residences, Eastern-Orthodox baptisms—when he first immigrated to the US in the 80s from Romania. The replica of a photo book that holds none of these images is a shell through which we project familiarity, an untold journey first-generation Americans may seldom be able to access.

Artists can reshape distance. Keiron de Nobriga rescues discarded architectural adornments and polishes them into idealist, modernist shapes through heavily laborious confrontation with the material in a manner that shows none of the labor of becoming and belonging. Throughout the exhibition, his sculptures will be moved to create new configurations, as a form of love and compassion for common ancestral histories and the circularity of life. Cole Lu's work begins with a brief anecdote amid the carnage, often perceived as a parable. Through shifting contexts of colonial narratives, his work reframes the value of what is subject to Others in the history of western civilization; his work is often composed with the elaborate title as fragmented narrative, deploying (re)invention, (re)naming, and (re)writing as gestures to critique the logic of *creatio ex nihilo* (*creation out of nothingness*), justified by creation myth to erase physically and discursively preexistence of people, cultures, and languages to a zero degree "nihil." Pairing the futility of memory with a desire to record, the labor invested in each carefully considered detail may provide a method of healing.

However idealist some of the works are, Christina Barrera's newly commissioned installation grounds us in the political realities of the present. Quoting Vice President Kamala Harris' words delivered to the people of Guatemala, "Do Not Come / There's Nothing Here for You," Barrera's flags spill out from the interior to the exterior, echoing the hollowness of American promise, and proving—after entering the exhibition—the falsity of these words.

The artworks in this house reveal inherited cultures and narratives, symbols and physical ties to memories of past lands, and the therapeutic quest for belonging. "Home" is much more complicated than family, nationality, ethnorace, or geographic regions. For many artists, the search for home happens through the physiological mapping of the familiar, the imposed, and the foreign. Moreover, the immaterial finds its voice through the objects in this home—and the cohabitation of these artists under one roof—signalling new communities and generations that will make their mark for years to come.

**ABOUT ACOMPI**

Founded by Constanza Valenzuela and Jack Radley, **ACOMPI** is a global curatorial collective based in New York City. ACOMPI derives from the Spanish word “acompañado,” meaning “in company”, highlighting community, interdisciplinary practice, and collaboration. ACOMPI serves as a youth-oriented, community-ingrained platform to highlight and expand the intersection of independent curatorial practice and site-specific public engagement. ACOMPI recently organized the colloquium “What Can NYC Art Museums Do For Immigrants?” at NYU Steinhardt and curated *Shanzhai Lyric: Canal Street Research Association*. Their projects have been featured in *The New York Times*, *Hyperallergic*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*, among other publications. @acompi.nyc

## **ABOUT NARS FOUNDATION**

The **New York Art Residency and Studios (NARS) Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit arts organization committed to supporting artists and curators on an international level as well as engaging the local community in Brooklyn and the Greater New York area. NARS provides an array of creative support services and professional development opportunities for emerging and mid-career artists through short-term integrated residency programs, progressive exhibition programs, international exchanges, and engaging public programs that foster global understanding and dynamic cross-cultural dialogues. These services operate in conjunction with our community outreach initiatives to promote greater accessibility to contemporary art for the under-served local community in south Brooklyn. Our mission is to present diverse platforms on which to nurture creative inspiration and innovative cross-pollination of ideas. @narsfoundation

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