

ANIMAL,
VEGETABLE,
NOR
MINERAL

ART &
WRITING BY

MILJOHN
RUPERTO

MAGGIE DETHLOFF & MILJOHN RUPERTO



Miljohn Ruperto, *Demonology: Pazuzu*, 2015.
Lenticular print, 16 × 20 in. (40.64 × 76.2 cm)

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Director's Foreword

When the Cantor Arts Center offers an artist a solo show, it is an opportunity for us to share the work by artists we find compelling with wider audiences, especially for the many talented artists out there who are neither household names nor market darlings.¹ Our position as a university art museum within Stanford's academic community enables us to champion artists whose work is more conceptual than commercial. Not being beholden to box office revenue is a freedom and privilege that we know we are fortunate to have—and that gives us an essential role in the broader art ecosystem, especially in challenging times.

When Maggie Dethloff, the Cantor's assistant curator of photography and new media, proposed a mid-career survey of Miljohn Ruperto's work, it seemed meant to be. As Maggie shares in her insightful essay, Ruperto's work is deeply interdisciplinary, collaborative, and philosophical—precisely the kind of work that benefits from the larger context and breadth that only a sensitive museum survey can provide. An exhibition's teaching potential is always top of mind for us as well. We look forward to the ways that *Animal, Vegetable, nor Mineral* will catalyze generative conversations among students and inform innovative research undertaken at the university and beyond.

Ruperto's work was prominently featured in a small but significant exhibition that Maggie curated for the Cantor in 2022. *At Home / On Stage: Asian American Representation in Photography and Film* “was premised on the idea that photography, film, and video are key mediums for considering histories of representation. They have been employed both to spread harmful depictions of Asian Americans and to oppose such portrayals.”² In many ways, the humming sound of a projected film by Ruperto served as the heartbeat of the exhibition.

The 16 mm film *Appearance of Isabel Rosario Cooper* (2006–10) consists of a montage of every known scene in a Hollywood movie that featured Isabel Rosario Cooper, a notable Filipina actress who came to the United States in the 1930s and found her career in America reduced to minor roles. In the film, part of a larger suite of works devoted to the actress and acquired by the Cantor in 2023, Ruperto digitally blurs out everything but Cooper herself. In doing so, he transforms her into a principal protagonist while simultaneously evoking the ways she was relegated to the sidelines and reduced to stereotypes in the films that featured her.

Although *Animal, Vegetable, nor Mineral: Works by Miljohn Ruperto* explores very different subjects than *At Home / On Stage*, it builds upon the Cantor's Asian American Art Initiative (AAAI), dedicated to amplifying and supporting artists of the Asian diaspora through exhibitions, acquisitions, research, and programming. Central to the AAAI's mission is to ensure that current and future generations of students, visitors, curators, and art historians are exposed to the great richness and diversity of Asian American art and that talented contemporary artists such as Ruperto receive the kind of institutional support that prior generations were rarely afforded. This catalogue is the second of a series of books published as part of the initiative, which will continue to offer new research on Asian American art and artists in the years to come.

I want to thank Maggie Dethloff, first and foremost, for her steadfast commitment to Ruperto's work and for being as collaborative a curator as Ruperto is an artist. For this project, Maggie forged exciting collaborations with Stanford Robotics Center and Stanford Virtual Human Interaction Lab, and with the Minnesota Street Project Foundation in San Francisco. I want to thank Lily Soogrim for managing the myriad intricate details that make exhibitions at the Cantor possible and for her inspired oversight of the museum's growing investment in publications; Marion Gill, our deputy director, for enabling our staff and exhibition program to be ambitious; and Deborah Cullinan, vice president for the arts, for lifting up the arts at Stanford and for making what we do more visible and rewarding. We could not do this crucial work without the support of donors and community members. I would like to thank Sue and John Diekman for their generous support, as well as Amy Corton and Carl Eibl, Genie Dethloff, and Megan O'Reilly Lewis and Todd Lewis. And above all, I want to thank Miljohn Ruperto for making works that ask fundamental and fascinating questions about the nature of knowledge itself.

Veronica Roberts
John and Jill Freidenrich Director

1. For the Cantor, it's a particularly meaningful commitment since we are better known for organizing and hosting group shows such as *Spirit House* (Cantor, 2024), *Day Jobs* (Cantor, 2024), *Second Nature: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene* (2025, organized by the Nasher Museum at Duke University and the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum), and *When Home Won't Let You Stay: Migration Through Contemporary Art* (2020, organized by ICA Boston), to cite a few recent examples.
2. Maggie Dethloff, exhibition introductory wall text, *At Home / On Stage: Asian American Representation in Photography and Film*.

Once you name some- thing, it's already over

Maggie Dethloff

Miljohn Ruperto, *Janus*, 2014, 4K video
(color, sound), 3:30 min., looped



Miljohn Ruperto's three-minute animation *Janus* is about flux. In this work, named for the two-faced Roman god associated with transitions, Ruperto revisits a classic bivalent optical illusion: the duck-rabbit—an illustration of either a duck or a rabbit, depending on what you focus on. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) called this “seeing as,” highlighting the subjective nature of reality and the mental maneuvers we often take for granted when we interpret what we perceive.¹ In *Janus*, Ruperto's duck-rabbit is not static, but animated on the threshold of death, bleeding (the rabbit) and gasping (the duck). Ruperto's duck-rabbit is simultaneously and continually seen to be in two states of flux: vacillating between being a duck and a rabbit and between being alive and dead. It's a Schrödinger's cat scenario: The cat is both dead and alive as long as it remains in the box.² But here, although we see into the box, we can't even trust our own eyes to tell us if the cat is dead or alive, for it is both and neither at the same time.

For the past 20 years Ruperto has maintained a distinctive artistic practice, comprising photography, video, animation, generative artificial intelligence, and more. Playing with religion, superstition, science, and technology, Ruperto undercuts and interrogates frameworks for understanding the world, chronicling its history, and

imagining its future. Through a wide-ranging body of multivalent and interpretively open-ended artworks—produced collaboratively with other artists, scholars, scientists, and technologists, and referencing and reworking existing texts, artworks, and popular media—the artist suggests the nature of knowledge is elusive or uncertain; that, even as stridently as we reach for it, there will always be some understanding that evades our grasp.³

The title of this volume, and the exhibition at the Cantor Arts Center it accompanies,⁴ gestures playfully to the elusive nature of knowledge by referencing the children's game 20 Questions, in which one person tries to guess what another is thinking of through yes or no questions. In the titular variation, gameplay begins with the imagining player assigning their chosen thing to a category: animal, vegetable, or mineral. Ruperto's work undercuts the idea that the world can be so easily categorized and understood, revealing the imprecise and porous boundaries of such broad human-defined categories, including the very concept of "nature" itself.⁵ Historically understood in Western cultures to encompass everything outside humanity, nature has served as a container into which human desires and fears are channeled, and as the foil against which human civilization is defined.⁶

As an artist born in the Philippines but raised in the United States, Ruperto has stated he finds it hard to unlearn Western paradigms of nature, time, and subjecthood. Totalizing ideologies, these Western frameworks pretend to objectivity and certainty; in an ongoing act of colonial violence, they estrange and invalidate non-Western forms of knowledge and relationality.⁷ Ruperto's work is grounded in a desire to decenter Western systems and open space for alternatives. His collaborative praxis is one way he does this, championing interdependence and cooperation—not isolated genius—as vital and innate to creativity and scholarship.

In his artworks he reveals the limitations of Western structures by demonstrating their operation and dire consequences, and by highlighting productive moments of openness within. In doing so, Ruperto encourages his viewers to recognize them in their own experiences, question them, choose alternatives, and iterate new models.⁸ In the artworks assembled for the exhibition at the Cantor, Ruperto reproduces and plays with Western conceptions of the natural world and its use of landscape as a formal and ideological tool. From speculative deep-sea creatures to fantastical botanical specimens and animated mineral monsters, from unending shorelines and meandering rivers to immersive apocalyptic landscapes, Ruperto and his co-creators make work that defies the bifurcation of human and non-human; unsettles traditional, Western ways of classifying and representing nature; and inspires other ways of relating to the world around us.

ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MINERAL

While the game 20 Questions takes scientific taxonomies as its model, the Great Chain of Being—a hierarchical organization from antiquity that placed spiritual man at the top, followed by sentient animals, growing plants, and inert minerals—serves as another reference point for the artist. Unsettling both spiritual and scientific orders, Ruperto's minerals are not inert, his plants grow in improbable ways, and his animals metamorphose and become stone. In *The Corpse*, created in collaboration with artist Candice Lin, predator and prey were modeled by hand, scanned through photogrammetry, and merged digitally before being 3D printed in clay as one fossilized being. The work references potter and natural scientist Bernard Palissy (c. 1510–1589), one of the earliest to understand fossils as the result of mineral processes. The cycle described by Palissy, Ruperto muses, "based on heat, water, and mineral, becomes recursive looping pockets within the Great Chain of Being where life

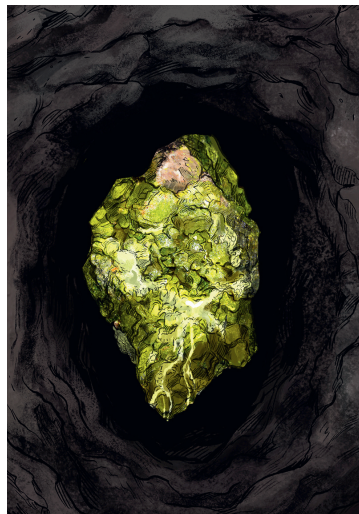


Miljohn Ruperto and Candice Lin, *The Corpse* from the series *Putrefaction*, 2024. 3D printed ceramic and high fire glaze. Head: 5 × 12 × 16 in. (12.7 × 30.48 × 40.64 cm); Middle: 4.25 × 14.5 × 19.5 in. (10.80 × 36.83 × 49.53 cm); Tail: 5.5 × 10 × 15.25 in. (13.97 × 25.4 × 38.74 cm)

and death cycle through independently, away from the directedness of a cosmic will.”⁹

Mineral Monsters, a series of eight two-frame looping animations of quivering rocks animated by Aimée de Jongh¹⁰ suggests the imposition of a human will instead, interrogating humans’ tendency to anthropomorphize their subjects of study. The work responds to a quote from philosopher Georges Canguilhem (1904–1995) in his book *Knowledge of Life*, an impactful text detailing the reciprocal influences between philosophical and biological conceptions of life. His quote “there are no mineral monsters” conveys both that monstrosity is predicated on social definitions of abnormality and science is not an objective system immune to human notions.¹¹

Not monstrous but mysterious, the plants in the *Voynich Botanical Studies*, created with artist Ulrik Heltoft, take as their point

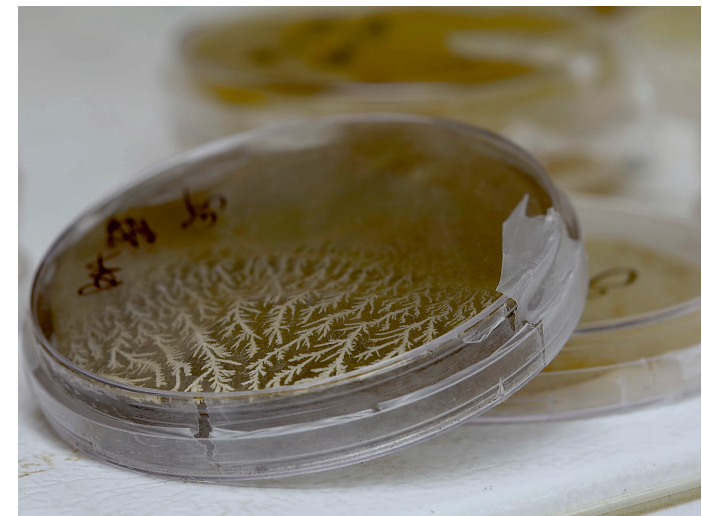


Miljohn Ruperto and Aimée de Jongh, *Mineral Monster 03*, 2014. 2-frame animation (color, no sound), looped

of departure botanical illustrations—realistically rendered yet fantastical in form—from an indecipherable 15th- or 16th-century manuscript. The artists recreated drawings from the Voynich Manuscript in 3D using digital software and added realistic plant textures before transferring the images to 4 × 5-inch negatives and printing them on gelatin silver photographic paper. The resulting photographs recall Karl Blossfeldt’s (1865–1932) early 20th-century formalist botanical photographs, though they feature plants made not by God or by nature but through a series of formal and aesthetic translations.

GEOMANCIES

Monstrous minerals, mysterious plants, and hybridized creatures reappear in Ruperto’s *Geomancies* series in the form of roiling dust storms, the fungal infection valley fever, and the canine-faced Mesopotamian demon of the south-west wind Pazuzu. These specters of contagion and possession haunt the central video work of the series, *Ordinal SW/NE*, suggesting that humans are not sovereign forms animated only by the spirit within, but permeable and susceptible to danger and influence from without. In the film created with Rini Yun Matea (formerly Keagy)—which Ruperto refers to as a horror movie—the protagonist, Josiah, has a persistent cough



Miljohn Ruperto and Rini Yun Matea, *Ordinal (SW/NE)*, 2017. Video (color, sound), 43:05 min.



Milijohn Ruperto and Rini Yun Matea, Ordinal (SW/NE), 2017. Video (color, sound), 43:05 min.

and fears he's caught valley fever. While Josiah assesses his own illness through medical data, he also prays to a Christian god to negotiate for the well-being of a friend's sickly newborn. The friend, an unseen narrator, in turn invokes Pazuzu, to whom Mesopotamian women often prayed for protection against the child-killing demon Lamashtu. The film continues to weave together overlapping and intersecting stories: Pazuzu recalls the movies The Exorcist (1971), in which he possesses a child, and The Exorcist II: The Heretic (1977), during the filming of which the director contracted valley fever—while the figure of Lamashtu, canonically pictured nursing little beasties, is echoed in scenes of the pregnant and nursing character Rose of Sharon from John Steinbeck's Dust Bowl novel Grapes of Wrath (1939).

Invoking systems of divination for which the series is named (geomancy translates to earth divination), Ruperto experiments with coincidence and correlation as a formal device, intermingling the various frameworks that humankind has devised to understand and, at times, attempt to control the world in the face of existential threat. Interspersed aerial views of in-ground pools, agricultural lands, solar and wind farms, and a

massive dust storm¹² presage Ruperto's ongoing exploration of landscape as a formal and ideological device and suggest our complicity in creating, through water-intensive resource extraction, the very disaster conditions that threaten us.

LANDSCAPE

In recent works, Ruperto has followed humankind's extractive activity to the farthest frontiers of the natural world. In Fathoms (Tartarapelagic), created with artist Daniel Small and data scientist Kavish Kapoor, a panoply of fantastical forms emerges from darkness, created by a generative AI trained on deep-sea creatures recently discovered in the Pacific Ocean's Clarion-Clipperton Zone. The work employs a dark humor: New species are made visible through water- and energy-guzzling technologies that may well lead to their demise, just as the wondrous possibilities of new expanses are already foreclosed by certain destruction, as, Ruperto notes, "mining companies have already occupied that beyond."¹³ The STAR CATALOGUE A View From 55 Cancri e puts a fine point on this. The catalogue consists of a 2,000-page list of stars as seen from the speculative viewpoint of exoplanet 55 Cancri e, a planet once thought to have a layer of diamond around its core. Popular news articles joked about "interstellar Jared [Jewelers] stores," before warning readers that mining this diamond isn't going to happen anytime soon, as it's 40 light years away.¹⁴

In a new three-part series, Ruperto traces these ideas of limitless expansion and consumption to a particularly potent moment in the 19th century when American landscape painting pictured the wilds of the continent as a new Eden ripe for settlement and extraction. Called The Great Disappointment, the series refers to the failed apocalypse of the 19th-century Christian religious sect the Millerites. Led by William Miller (1782–1849), the Millerites calculated through biblical exegesis that the second coming of Christ would occur

on October 22, 1844, but when the day came and went, the group dissolved.¹⁵ Part III of the series, What God Hath Wrought (*Kairos*), commissioned by the Cantor Arts Center, presents three apocalyptic digital animations created in Unreal Engine—a 3D computer graphics and game design software—by CG artist and creative director Jay H. Patel. Each animation, based on three paintings by Thomas Cole (1801–1848), follows a Millerite woman through an encampment, into the forest, and to a cliff. In the first, the encampment is filled with grief-stricken Millerites; in the second, the landscape is on fire; and in the third, a dark, empty encampment leads to a terrifying vista. By exploring how the West envisions its own end, Ruperto urges viewers to consider today’s apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic conditions. The artist notes that through colonial violence, the “horror of mass social and environmental collapse” has already occurred and continues to unfold.¹⁶ At the same time, we are currently in a new wave of apocalyptic transition, late-stage capitalism. With the option to experience the work in three dimensions by donning virtual reality headsets, What God Hath Wrought connects the rapacious attitudes of 19th-century colonialism and zealous entitlement to a similar rapaciousness in the present, sited in a new frontier of unending virtual worlds.

By contrast, Ruperto’s three channel video work Cut Line, created in collaboration with artist Vishal Jugdeo, presents the landscape as offering a different kind of bounty, one that, once we understand the relationship between Western modes of knowing and coloniality, instead supports manifold ways of articulating our relationships to nature and history. The video’s central motif is a rising and falling, meandering tropical river that Ruperto generated in Unreal Engine. The river serves as a “neutral” container for Jugdeo’s exploration of his family’s diasporic relation to Guyana, traced to his great-grandfather, a worker from India indentured in the British colony; historian Vikram Tamboli’s broader

Milijohn Ruperto, What God Hath Wrought (*Kairos*)
from the series The Great Disappointment,
2026—ongoing. Three animations with a VR
component (color, sound)



Thomas Cole, A View of the Mountain
Pass Called the Notch of the White
Mountains (Crawford Notch), 1839.
Oil on canvas, 40 3/16 x 61 5/16 in.
(102 x 155.8 cm)

Milijohn Ruperto and Vishal Jugdeo, Cut Line, 2024.
Three channel 4K video (color, sound), 26:00 min.



historical contextualization of colonialism, migration, and indentured servitude in the country; and Guyanese journalist Nazima Raghbir's account of a flooding disaster. Read through multiple lenses—the extractive and exploitative economies of colonialism and late-stage capitalism, the wrath of nature, family histories, personal memory, and more—the river landscape, like Canguilhem's minerals, has no inherent, fixed morality or meaning. It can be the stage for multiple histories and not only apocalyptic but luminous futures as well.¹⁷



Intended not as a traditional exhibition catalogue, this publication provides expanded context for Ruperto's artwork by showcasing how writing about and curating other artists' and writers' work functions as an integral part of his practice and reflects the conceptual underpinnings of his artworks. Presenting several of these short but vital texts together for the first time, this volume elucidates the enticingly tangled threads of time and space, subjectivity and relationality, history-making and future-building that connect the artist's wide-ranging and erudite visual output.

In 2016, Ruperto co-curated an exhibition with Sohrab Mohebbi entirely through an exchange of artwork suggestions answered with only “yes” or “no.”¹⁸ Unlike the gameplay of 20 Questions, there was no right answer. The result was, rather, a constellation of artworks open-ended enough to be read through two or more interpretive lenses. A recent brief conversation between Ruperto and Mohebbi reflecting on this process is presented here in “Apeirophobia/Aporia.”

In his essay “Interverification” Ruperto discusses Rosalind Nashashibi's film *Denim Sky* (2022), structured around three flips of a coin and science fiction grande dame Ursula K. Le Guin's short story “The Shobies' Story” (1990), as one possible model for addressing the inherent power imbalances in the act of representation.¹⁹

The characters and the filmmaker are bound by the same circumstances of chance and participate in the same process of “interverification,” arriving at a mutually agreed upon truth through sharing stories. But Ruperto notes in conversation, “once you name something, it's already over,” gesturing to the danger of foreclosing the sense of possibility inherent in chance by emphasizing clarity and cohesion too much.²⁰

The structure of Ruperto's essay “Leveling” counters this danger.²¹ Written for Coleman Collins's subtractive relief artworks—created by carving the design deeper than the background—Ruperto discusses various resonant instances of layering and unlayering across time and space: rhymes, history, archaeology, and vector graphics. Each activity relies on extrapolation, a relational operation that introduces the possibility of both error and infinity.

In his essay “Saeculum” Ruperto discusses Na Mira and Simon Leung's performance *The Moon Scratches My Heart* (2024), exploring aesthetic, political, and ethical inheritance through reflections on a selection of artists, actors, and writers no longer with us.²² Naming his essay after the Roman term for the period between an event and when its last witness dies, Ruperto considers the impulse and act of memorialization through Homer's *Iliad*. Ruperto's text makes clear that everything unfolds through relationality and that this is what lends meaning to life.

In his most recent writing, his essay titled “Kalibutan” for Filipino writer and curator Patrick Flores, Ruperto discusses how entrenched power relies on extending the seemingly inevitable status quo into the future.²³ Taking as a charge the word *kalibutan* (a Visayan language word meaning both world and consciousness), however, Ruperto affirms that, as “consciousness is formed through encounter and mediation with others,” building new worlds can and does arise through “shared collective creation.”



Although Schrödinger's cat is pretend, we should consider its death a real warning, for the stakes of how we relate to the world are not purely philosophical but also material. Presenting Ruperto's first large-scale solo museum exhibition at Stanford University is not a neutral move. Built with wealth generated from the transcontinental railroad—which displaced Indigenous communities, abused Chinese laborers, scarred the land, and accelerated resource extraction and settlement—Stanford is an example of the colonial and capitalist legacies Ruperto asks viewers to consider. As a major university and part of Silicon Valley, the institution continues to lead in some of the most consequential intellectual and technological endeavors of our time. Following Ruperto's example, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to probe the assumptions underlying these ventures, embrace alternative models of knowledge and relationality, and shape the world anew in more just ways.²⁴ As Ruperto writes, "I have great faith that we can come together and instantiate futures."²⁵

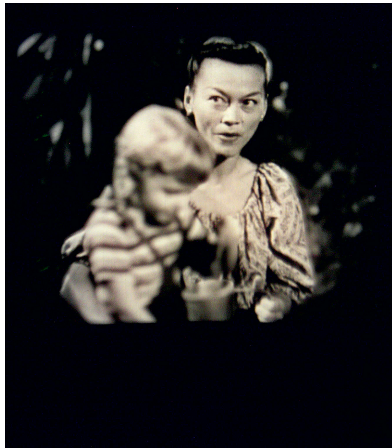
- Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, *The Collected Works of Ludwig Wittgenstein*, Vol. 8, digital ed. (InteLex Corp, 1998; print vol., Blackwell Publishers, 1958–98), 193–207. Accessed September 5, 2025.
- A thought experiment illustrating the simultaneous occurrence of two states in quantum mechanics, the Schrödinger's cat scenario has been elucidated to suggest different phenomena over the past 90 years. While the act of observation affixes a single outcome in some interpretations, the same moment bears multiple outcomes, even multiple forking universes, in others. Still others consider how the outcome itself can be settled and unresolved at the same time, based on the contrary observations of the human and the cat. Jan Faye, "Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2024 Edition), eds. Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2024/entries/qm-copenhagen/>; Lev Vaidman, "Many-Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/qm-manyworlds/>; Carlo Rovelli, "Relational Quantum Mechanics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2025 Edition), eds. Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2025/entries/qm-relational/>.
- This central thread of Ruperto's work was established in his early video *The Elusive Nardong Putik* (2000/2019). In an imaginary conversation with an unnamed interviewer, the Robin Hood-like Filipino gangster Leonardo Malihan Manicio (1923–1971), better known by his nickname Nardong Putik, is seen from behind as he walks down a road. He resists the interviewer's questions but hints at his fascination with his own mythologization and an interest in being remembered. Both the visual of unending pursuit and the audio of evasion makes clear: A desire to assign fixity to persons, places, and situations will always be at least partially frustrated.
- Animal, Vegetable, nor Mineral: Works by Miljohn Ruperto*, March 12–September 14, 2026, Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University.
- In truth, the game itself often reveals the flaws in its own logic. Is a wood table a vegetable because it was once a tree, or a mineral because it's no longer alive?
- Ruperto expounds on this idea in his treatise *An Operational Account of Western Spatio-Temporality* (X Artists' Books, 2024), designed by Margaret Tedesco, describing the way time has been understood within the history of the West. From the Ancient Greek, *aion* refers to "eternal time," *chronos* to "historical time" and *kairos* to our subjective awareness of time that, like Janus, is always looking backward and forward simultaneously and reaffirming "the subject's existential relationship to the world."
- A full discussion of this complex topic is not possible here. For further elaboration on the relationship between colonialism, modernity, and Enlightenment principals of rational and objective inquiry, and its lasting impact through the "coloniality of knowledge," see one of the foundational texts of decolonial theory: Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality," *Cultural Studies* 21, nos. 2–3 (March/May 2007): 168–178. DOI: 10.1080/09502380601164353.
- As Ruperto writes in *An Operational Account of Western Spatio-Temporality*, "The postcolonial project of this pamphlet is to delimit totalizing Western spatio-temporality through constructing an account of its operation."
- Exhibition text, *Putrefaction: Candice Lin & Miljohn Ruperto*, September 13–November 1, 2024, Micki Meng Gallery, San Francisco.
- Informed by conversations with neuroscientist Rajan Bhattacharyya, *Mineral Monsters* plays a trick on the viewer's eye. Each animation consists of two frames, akin to left- and right-eye views, which, as they cycle, produce a wiggly 3D effect.
- Georges Canguilhem, *Knowledge of Life*, ed. Paola Marrati and Todd Meyers (Fordham University Press, 2008), 135.
- Taken in 1977 by Chevron employee Sam Chase, the photo captures a mile-high plume of dust during California's most severe recorded drought. Ruperto brings this same image to life in his looped animation *Re-animating "Valley Turbulence" by Sam Chase* (2015).
- Conversation with the artist, September 21, 2023; unpublished artist statement, January 8, 2025. Indeed, the International Seabed Authority (ISA) has issued several exploratory licenses for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone. "Clarion Clipperton Fracture Zone | Exploration Area," International Seabed

Miljohn Ruperto, *The Elusive Nardong Putik*, 2000/2019, 8mm film transferred to digital video, 7:02 min.



Authority website, <https://isa.org.jm/maps/clarion-clipperton-fracture-zone/>. Accessed October 13, 2025.

14. Jim Shelton, Digital First Media, "Nation: Diamond Planet Discovery by Yale Researcher Unearths Geological Surprises," *The NewsHerald* (Southgate, MI), November 3, 2012. NewsBank: Access World News, <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.stanford.idm.oclc.org/apps/news/document-view?p=AWN-B&docref=news/16F912BF38221630>. Accessed September 5, 2025.
15. In conjunction with the exhibition at the Cantor Arts Center, the Cantor has partnered with Minnesota Street Project Foundation to present a concurrent exhibition of Ruperto's work titled *Miljohn Ruperto: Ultimate Days*, March 14–April 18, 2026. Commissioned by the Cantor, Part I of *The Great Disappointment* series, titled *Ultimate Days (Aion)*, will debut at Minnesota Street Project Foundation. Taking advantage of the generous space, *Ultimate Days* is a giant camera obscura immersing viewers in a simulation of the day of the predicted apocalypse, centered on the limestone outcroppings in a field on Miller's farm later named Ascension Rock. In the simulation, the clouds blow in the breeze, the sun passes across the sky, and the apocalypse never comes.
16. Unpublished artist statement, January 8, 2025.



17. Multiple modes of history-making and the liberatory possibilities inherent in these is also present in Ruperto's early breakout series *Isabel Rosario Cooper* (2006–10), focused on the underappreciated Filipina actress Isabel Rosario Cooper, who is more often historicized vis-à-vis her relationship with US General Douglas MacArthur than recognized for her own artistic contributions. Using multiple strategies across different mediums, Ruperto invokes Cooper's ghost to tell her own story. Like in *The Elusive*

Nardong Putik, viewers must accept that they will never get the full, true story, releasing Cooper from the marginalized positionality imposed on her.

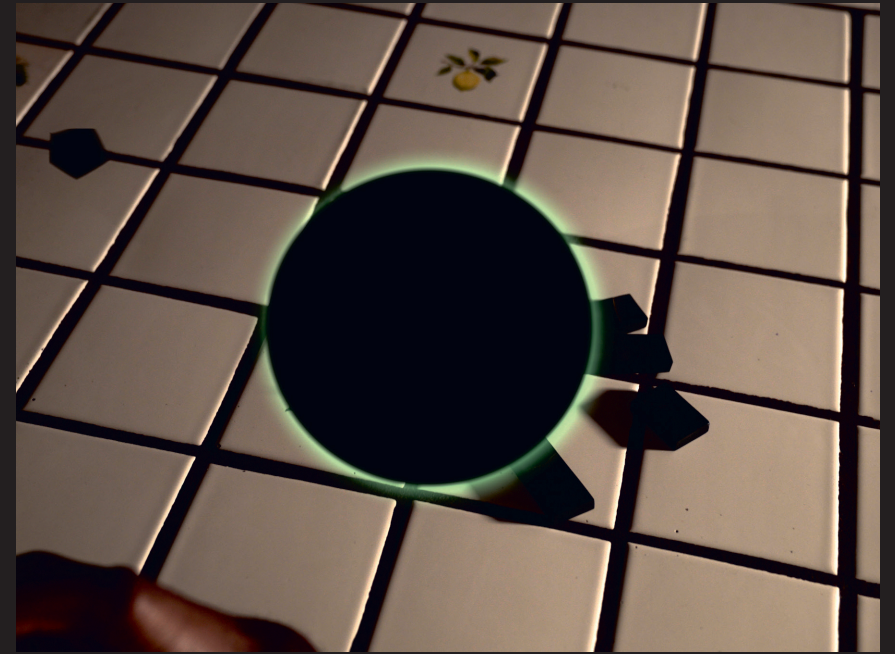
18. *Apeiophobia/Aporia*, July 1–31, 2016, Human Resources, Los Angeles.
19. "Interverification" was first published in Rosalind Nashashibi and Miljohn Ruperto, *Denim Sky* (Bel Ami, 2023), a small booklet released for the screening of Nashashibi's *Denim Sky*, May 16, 2023, Bel Ami Gallery, Los Angeles.
20. Conversation with the artist, March 11, 2024.
21. "Leveling: Coleman Collins" was offered as a handout during the run of *Coleman Collins: Leveling*, February 24–April 6, 2024, Erlich Steinberg Gallery, Los Angeles.
22. *The Moon Scratches My Heart*, written and performed by Simon Leung and directed and staged by Na Mira, was presented on May 18, 2024, in conjunction with the exhibition *Scratching at the Moon*, February 10–July 28, 2024, Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.
23. Portions of this text appear as a blurb in Patrick Flores, *Sensible Form: Essays* (ArtPostAsia, Inc., 2025).
24. The exhibition at Minnesota Street Project Foundation titled *Miljohn Ruperto: Ultimate Days*, March 14–April 18, 2026, also includes a new AI-generated film called *The New Society*, produced in collaboration with Patrick Eleazar from a screenplay written with Asher Hartman, which takes viewers on a journey confronting the transition to a new technologically advanced and egalitarian society. While some welcome the new society, others see it as a threat to their traditional values—a scenario that resonates with present-day political attacks on DEAI efforts as un-American. *The New Society* was previously presented as a film treatment, screenplay, storyboards, and concept art in *The Ctrl+P Journal / Biennale of Contemporary Art*, December 2024–ongoing, https://www.ctrlp-artjournal.org/uploads/4/2/9/8/42984941/2024_ctrl_p_journal_biennale_of_contemporary_art_ground.pdf. Accessed September 24, 2025.
25. Unpublished artist statement, January 8, 2025.

Miljohn Ruperto, Appearance of Isabel Rosario Cooper, from the series *Isabel Rosario Cooper*, 2006–2010, 16 mm film (color, no sound), 11:39 min.





Milijohn Ruperto and Rini Yun Matea, *Ordinal* (S/W/N/E), 2017.
Video (color, sound), 43:05 min.



Interverification

Let us pull on the strands of Rosalind Nashashibi's film, *Denim Sky* (2018–2022), to reveal a cosmology the artist has carefully spun. We can start from Nashashibi's reference materials—the *I Ching* (c. 1000 b.c.e) and Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Shobies' Story" (1990)—which are woven into the film's robust internal structure. Using synchronicity to allow for the reception of emergent aesthetics, we will follow the thread which leads Nashashibi to construct types of acausal relational possibilities: alternatives to an artist's or film director's willful imposition upon the other.

PART I AND PART II, INTERVERIFICATION

A CHAIN OF COMMAND IS EASY TO DESCRIBE; A NETWORK OF RESPONSE ISN'T. TO THOSE WHO LIVE BY MUTUAL EMPOWERMENT, "THICK" DESCRIPTION, COMPLEX AND OPEN-ENDED, IS NORMAL AND COMPREHENSIBLE, BUT TO THOSE WHOSE ONLY MODEL IS HIERARCHIC CONTROL, SUCH DESCRIPTION SEEMS A MUD-DLE, A MESS, ALONG WITH WHAT IT DESCRIBES. WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

- URSULA K. LE GUIN, "THE SHOBIES' STORY," 1990

For many artists, anxiety arises from their relationship to representation. The issue of instrumentalization of the other through representation pushes the artist to constantly re-evaluate their relation to the subject represented. Since representation opens up negative complications regarding responsibility around power dynamics, artists are compelled to invent new possible relational scenarios. It seems difficult to find a convincing configuration where the artist does not impose their aesthetics upon the subject. After all, the represented will always be (tautologically) represented by the artist in an artwork.

Rosalind Nashashibi's *Denim Sky* offers a possible configuration to address this issue. Nashashibi's film reconfigures the dynamics in the operation of representation from within the film, by centering around Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Shobies' Story," and from without, by employing divination as the film's organizing logic.

Let us start with from without. Nashashibi divides the film into three parts, the titles of which come from the *I Ching*. The titles of the three film parts are generated from a cleromantic source, that is, the names and structures of the parts are formed directly from a contingent event: the flipping of three coins. This leaves the aesthetic logic of the film to chance (the outside), making the artist a subject of imposition too, the same as the subjects of the film. The resulting divination, a material configuration, imposes its organizing principle, its aesthetics, upon both the artist and the subjects, and so all

must fit into that aesthetic scheme. The artist and the subjects conform to this formal compartment, shifting the relation of the whole representational dynamic. The aesthetic imposition does not need to be strong; in this case it is a grouping of people. The artist and the subjects now share the same relation to the aesthetic imposition: they are all imposed upon from the outside. This creates a shared intimacy.

Nashashibi cultivates this intimacy by applying organizational logic from Le Guin's "The Shobies' Story." In the story, a crew of travelers, the Shobies, go on an experimental interstellar journey resulting in the fracturing of their shared reality into radically individuated realities. The travelers cohere again, both individually and collectively, by sharing their accounts of their experiences with each other. Le Guin instantiates the word "interverify" to describe this operation. In Part I of the film, Nashashibi herself tells the Shobies' story and loosely enacts the story in Part II with her family and friends. *Denim Sky's* project of offering new possible configurations of a family unit mirrors Le Guin's collective, the Shobies, formed from a volunteering collection of motley characters whose relations resist conventions. More importantly, the conceit of Le Guin's story, that only through the collective operation of sharing stories can one locate themselves subjectively and objectively (also spatially and temporally), is echoed in Nashashibi's version of interverification: the artist presents multiple accounts and stories by her "crew" to create a grouping, instantiating an intimate unit. The sharing of stories becomes the organizing principle for this grouping. Collectively sharing stories has two effects: in sharing, the group coheres and in storytelling, the subject coheres. An egalitarian community, for Nashashibi, is constituted from adding up the subjects' respective good faith in sharing and their exercise of agency. The sharers represent themselves, interverified.

In this intimacy achieved through shared storytelling, there is a rearrangement of the representational dynamic from within. Nashashibi offers self-representation within a shared egalitarian space as a model to address the problem of the artist representing the subject or the artist imposing their aesthetics upon the subject. In Nashashibi's formulation, the artist and the subjects contribute to the creation of the aesthetics. There is the possibility, then, of no aesthetic imposition (from without), since in their grouping there is also an agreement (to sharing stories), which generates a loose aesthetic scheme.

The artist and her crew come together like the Shobies: non-hierarchical. Since there is no imposition, there is also no compartment. The subject preserves their agency and relates to the artist and others only through an agreed sharing. The relational dynamics become defined through the contribution of each participant.

Nashashibi's strategy of employing divination and using Le Guin's model creates an inventive address to the problems of representation from both outside going in and inside going out. First Nashashibi reorders the dynamic of the artist imposing upon the subjects, to outside forces (the world) imposing upon both the subjects and the artist. In using divination, this imposition becomes decoupled from an agent. Since no one benefits from the imposition, the imposition becomes an objective imposition, an imposition from the outside: either from the world or nature. Secondly, Nashashibi allocates the reason for the grouping to its own members' agency; their decision to share stories instantiates the grouping, forming community. This instantiated grouping is non-hierarchical, its members volunteer to present their own stories and represent themselves. This good faith agreement becomes the foundation of a possible egalitarian answer to the problem of instrumentalization in representation.*

*Nashashibi's overall formulation also clears up her use of film as a medium. It becomes of prime importance that the relation between artist/subject/mediation is precisely articulated. With film, the relations are explicit (more so than the relational murkiness of digital video). The process of filming (from production processes, on-set hierarchies, cinematic conventions, etc.) crystallizes into the tool "filmmaking" and the triangulated structure is rendered in vivid clarity—depicting the process of aesthetic mediation intelligibly. Each node assumes full integrity and so dynamics between them are clear. The operation of film as an entangling apparatus becomes easier to follow and map out. Nashashibi's casualness of using a final video output shows that it is the clarity of film's dynamics that is important, not necessarily the inherent "film-ness" of the medium or nostalgia for film itself. Translation to digital video severs any type of nostalgic adherence to filmic materiality and power dynamics. Digital video becomes a tool for transmission only and escapes the problems of mediation (a convenient functional output).

PART III, APOPHENIA

ALL THESE WOOLEN STRIPS, THESE VAIN,
WINGED TASSELS, WERE NERVES OF THE NEXUS
RERUM, THE CONNECTION OF EVERYTHING
WITH EVERYTHING ELSE, WHICH ALONE GIVES
MEANING TO LIFE. WE LIVE EVERY MOMENT
OF OUR LIVES SWATHED IN THOSE TIES, WHITE
BECAUSE WHITE IS THE COLOR THE OLYMPIANS
LIKE, OR RED BECAUSE BLOOD TIES US TO
DEATH, OR PURPLE, YELLOW, AND GREEN.
BUT WE CAN'T ALWAYS SEE THEM, INDEED
WE MUSTN'T, BECAUSE THEN WE WOULD BE
PARALYZED, TRAPPED. WE FEEL THEM BLOWING
ABOUT US THE MINUTE SOMETHING HAPPENS
TO DISPEL OUR APATHY, AND WE BECOME
AWARE OF BEING CARRIED ALONG ON A
STREAM THAT FLOWS TOWARD SOMETHING
UNKNOWN. AND JUST SOMETIMES, BUT VERY
RARELY, THOSE TIES TWIST AND TURN AND
WEAVE AROUND US, UNTIL ONE LOOSE END
BECOMES KNOTTED TO ANOTHER. THEN, VERY
SOFTLY, THEY ENCOMPASS US, THEY FORM A
CIRCLE, WHICH IS THE CROWN, PERFECTION.

- ROBERTO CALASSO, *THE MARRIAGE OF CADMUS
AND HARMONY*, 1988

Part III of Nashashibi's *Denim Sky* lays out the aftermath of the interverification operation. The section starts two years later. The relations from the previous parts, which were in a state of suspension, allowing, or perhaps hoping for the potential of new forms of communal configuration, have now "settled" into something more socially coherent—Nashashibi's immediate family has transformed into a more traditional configuration, for example. The potentiality for a radical restructuring (emergent aesthetics) has now dissipated. There is a deep sense of mourning towards this loss of potentiality that pervades this last section. This lost potentiality slips from the present to be inevitably bound to subjective memory and finally to a collective history. Nashashibi presents this as a natural process: radical potentiality cannot be perpetually sustained—it must meet its eventual temporal horizon. It is actualized/realized or not.

All is not lost, however. In the closing of this temporal window, the structure that brings about potentiality itself is also revealed. Nashashibi introduces remembering (an echo of the Shobies' recounting) and reuses divination as a way to show that the hidden structure is actually the tension between synchronicity and its sister, coincidence. The two create an axis in the production of aesthetic potentiality. On one end, synchronicity reveals expanding possibilities: it is an aesthetic revelation. On the other end, coincidence is a subjective assertion, imposing its aesthetics upon events. Coincidence is an aesthetic imposition.

Carl Jung first used "synchronicity" publicly in his memorial address to the German translator of the *I Ching*, Richard Willhelm in 1930. Later, Jung used "an acausal connecting principle" as the subordinate title to his book *Synchronicity* (1960). Synchronicity is a relational relation: synchronicity links two or more things by ascribing a relation and then traces this relation through time. This ascription seems to need a subject ascribing, but its importance is relative. The ascription can be merely happenstance. In other words, the importance of the ascription is pegged to the condition of the "objective" relation of things: the range in between "everything being related" to "nothing being related." If everything is related, then the ascription, and therefore a need for a subject ascribing, is reduced to nil because the ascription is just a description (no willful imposition) since everything has a pre-established relation. Two things being related, then, is not notable. If everything is not related, however, then the ascription comes into its most strong (willful) version and synchronicity is taken over by coincidence. The subject instantiating synchronicity requires weak ascription.

Since synchronicity is acausal, the relation is always simultaneous; two or more things that are synchronous cannot come before or after one another, they need to be in the same presentness of unfolding time. The measure of synchronicity (how synchronous things are) becomes an operation of comparing likeness/affinity over time. The measure happens in the temporal register. A connective relation between all things must already exist; this connective relation, this hidden substrate, is a synchronic relation.

Coincidence is a subjective application or projection which frames two disparate events into meaningful relation; a

subject's limited imagination frames coincidence. The potential for coincidence is always delimited by the imagination of the individuated imposing subject. It is a willful aesthetic imposition, an assertion of subjectivity. Coincidence is the determinism of subjectivity. Coincidence, then, is not quite acausal because it is a strong imposition which is always "caused" by the subject imposing. It is an instantiation of relation and meaning at once. We can define an event as synchronous or coincidental through the relative strength of imposition, which directly corresponds to the power of instrumentalization: synchronicity (passive subject open to revelation) on one side and coincidence (willful subject imposing) on the other. These are the two poles in the spectrum of willful imposition. Synchronicity compels the subject to seek meaning outside itself, while in coincidence the subject imposes meaning. The operations of divination and remembering can be measured through this axis: in between revelation or imposition.

Synchronic divining is true divining. True divining requires the diviner to radically open themselves up to a logic beyond themselves in order to be receptive to an emergent aesthetic. The emergent aesthetic reveals itself to the diviner. And the diviner must expand and re-orient their world view in order for the emergent aesthetic to make sense. When divining is revelatory, it produces something called a mystery. A mystery is an aesthetic logic revealed, but its source may remain unknown. The diviner is transformed encountering a glimpse of this ungraspable logic: mystery. Their new self becomes the conduit for the divine. The potentiality through synchronic divining is not bound by the limits of the subject, because the subject is open to change. On the other hand, in coincidental divining, the diviner simply imposes their limited understanding upon the signs: The diviner becomes an impoverished (limited) translator of the divine.

When remembering is revelatory, it is called fate. When the logic that sequentially and meaningfully emerges through one's memories is perceived but remains beyond the subject's comprehension, it is called fate. With the idea of fate, logic is offered up to divine intervention. Fate fixes meaning outside of Oedipus's limited awareness, for example. Coincidental remembering is the commonplace definition of remembering; the subject threads meaning through their memories. The subject decides the meaning of their past.

Nashashibi's film locates itself in the realm of synchronicity, allowing divining and remembering to be revelatory, revealing both mystery and fate.

Synchronicity requires temporality. In divination, potentiality from synchronicity reveals itself in the future through mystery. In remembering, potentiality from synchronicity reveals itself in the present through fate.

The title of Part III is, "The wind blows over the lake and stirs the surface of the water. Thus visible effects of the invisible show themselves." Let us tug on a thread and reveal the structure of the invisible composition of these synchronicities. Roberto Calasso describes the ancient Greek concept of multiple relational substrates which constituted their reality. Calasso's text, *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, proposes a synchronized, multi-register reality, where each register is instantiated from a type of aesthetic relation. The types could be infinite. Since Calasso presumes a connective substrate a priori, radical possibility in divination or remembering would always require a radical openness, the opposite of willful imposition. Acausality would be the separation between registers, thereby any attempt to describe a connection between registers would always traverse through the acausal, rendering the connection acausal. Instead of registers, we can also imagine the multiple registers as worlds flowing in time, bracketed by acausality, yet sharing the same space. As one world merges with another, the shape of the shared merger produces what we call through divination, mystery, or through remembering, fate: this is the appearance of synchronicity in the material register. The further away these flows travel to merge with one another, the more intense the potentiality becomes. Coincidence, on the other hand, pulls from the subjective register into the material register. Since coincidence, too, traverses registers, the relation can be considered acausal before the subject's imposition.

In the film, artist Elena Narbutaitė rhymes with Calasso's cosmology when she describes multiple connections while looking at Juan de Zurbarán's *Still Life with Lemons in a Wicker Basket* (c. 1643–49) at The National Gallery in London. As she stands in front of the painting, Narbutaitė recounts impressions and memories, spinning a web of multiple relations the painting reveals to her. As she connects with the artwork, we are reminded that instantiating a relation

also creates a weird effect: relation creates the possibility of the transference of qualities. The painted lemons trigger Narbutaitė's memory of biting into an apple that had shared a plate with a quince for several days and finding that its taste and fragrance had become indistinguishable from the quince. Nashashibi reminds us that ultimately, these infinite possible relations arise from and are tied to material things in the world. It is this materiality which all connections and all potentialities rely upon. Divination must still synchronize or coincide with material configurations.

But what is all the effort for? What does this cosmological invention reveal? What happens when encounters with mystery and fate reveal hidden potentialities? Late in the film, Nashashibi recounts a childhood memory: while running through water at the shore, a fish jumped through her legs. This recounting synthesizes remembering and divining, fusing them together in synchronic harmony. In this scene Nashashibi finally gives a name (through Narbutaitė's exclamation) to the realization of mystery and fate: miracle. Mystery merely suggests an aesthetic logic outside the material register. The miracle instead reveals to the subject the existence of an outside register. This register outside operates on its own independent aesthetic logic and is separated from other registers by acausality. The material register is revealed synchronous with this source of mystery: a register of the divine. In mystery, the diviner transforms; in miracle, the material register transforms.

The film ends with Nashashibi beating a drum on a street, ending the film while announcing the final image: her son Pietro at the end of a rocky pier, twirling a closed umbrella like a spear. From this shore, perhaps Pietro, too, awaits the revelation of a miracle.



Miljohn Ruperto, *Re-animating "Valley Turbulence"* by Sam Chase, 2015. Video (color, no sound), 8 sec., looped



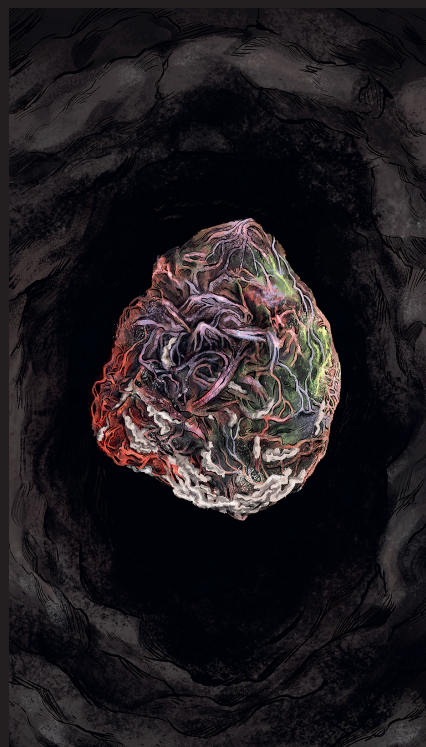


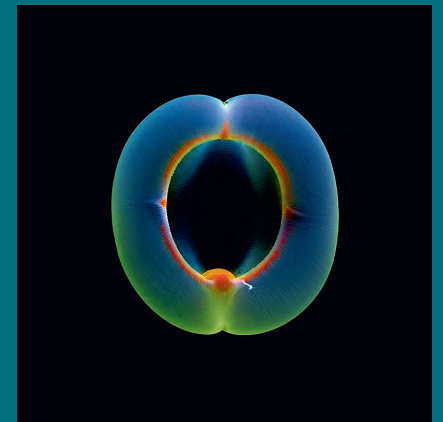
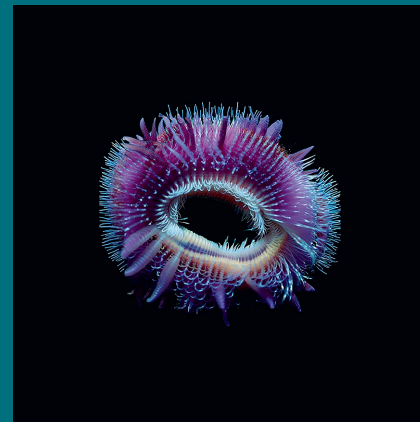
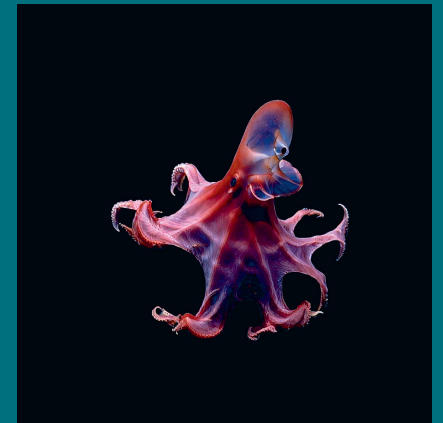
Miljohn Ruperto, *Seven and Five*, 2012. 7 channel video installation (color, sound), 21:30 min., with 7 CRT monitors on pedestals and 5 oil paintings, 43.3 x 67.52 in. (110 cm x 171.5 cm) (each)



(top) Painting 3 from Seven and Five, 2012. Oil on canvas, 43.3 x 67.52 in. (110 cm x 171.5 cm); (bottom) Still from Everything is Shore from Seven and Five, 2012. Video (color, sound), 21:30 min.

(top) Painting 2 from Seven and Five, 2012. Oil on canvas, 43.3 x 67.52 in. (110 cm x 171.5 cm); (bottom) Still from Everything is Shore from Seven and Five, 2012. Video (color, sound), 21:30 min.





Leveling

For Coleman Collins,
on his subtractive relief
works

Sunk relief is a type of artistic or architectural relief sculpture where the carved design is set into the surface of a flat background. The image or design is carved into a surface, typically a stone or a wall, in such a way that the carved elements are lower than the surrounding background. This creates a three-dimensional effect where the design appears to be sunken or recessed into the surface.

Sunk relief is characterized by the background being left untouched or only minimally carved, while the main elements of the design are carved into the surface to create depth and contrast.

The main example of sunk relief can be found in ancient Egyptian art, particularly in the hieroglyphs and scenes carved into the walls of tombs and temples.

Sunk relief is a contrast to another common relief technique called "bas-relief" or "low relief," where the carved elements are only slightly raised above the background. Sunk relief, on the other hand, creates a more dramatic and pronounced three-dimensional effect.

A rhyme has two aspects: formal and operational. To gauge the overall quality of a rhyme, we need to judge both aspects. The better the consonance between the rhyming parts (their particular shared characteristic) the better the formal qualities of a rhyme. The closer in shape the rhyming parts are, the closer their formal affinity. There is also a quantitative measure in the number of matching formal qualities. We can compare the symmetry between contours (the resolution based on the number of shared qualities) of the shape between the respective parts. The other axis of the rhyme measurement is in its operation. The resonance of this operational quality is tied to the impact of the meaning generated by the rhyme. This is achieved by the operation of one part of the rhyme revealing the hidden operation of the other. The one part overlays its own operation upon the second, opening up an undiscovered operational capability of the other. This transference is generative meaning making, which is judged by its transformative valence. To measure the quality of a rhyme we need to take into account both its formal and operational aspects. Let us call the formal axis, resolution, and the operational axis, intensity.

The usual analogy to describe time is space. Let us set the ground as the present. When we encounter the past, it is a flat plane consonant to the ground, our present. The past plane is the totality of material inheritance. The project of history is to project backwards a linear Cartesian scaffolding,

an extrapolation of the flat past plane receding into a three-dimensional perspectival construction. The lines in perspective are causal lines, meaning that they exist as linear progressive temporality, following a causal chain. The causal lines connecting event planes, construct a three-dimensional history. Occluded planes (events hiding behind other event planes) are extrapolated to give it a spatial dimension (this dimensionality is inferred). In other words, obscured elements are realized out of existing contextual historical evidence. The recess is chronological: what is most foreground are the most recent events, the most background are the most distant in the past. History requires collective good faith in its operation and a strict adherence to causality.

The primary goal of archeological excavation is to systematically uncover, document, and study artifacts, structures, and other cultural remains buried in the past. The method is designed to preserve and document cultural materials while revealing their historical and environmental contexts.

The excavation area is divided into a grid system, typically marked with stakes and strings. A datum point, a fixed reference point with known coordinates and elevation, is established to provide a standardized reference for all measurements and excavations. The actual digging process begins, typically using tools such as shovels, trowels, brushes, and sometimes mechanical equipment like backhoes (depending on the site's size and nature). Archaeologists carefully remove layers of soil or sediment, known as "strata," one at a time, documenting each layer and any associated artifacts, features, or changes in soil color or texture. Excavation proceeds slowly and systematically, often following natural stratigraphy to maintain the chronological sequence of deposits.

Specialized techniques such as total station surveying, photogrammetry, and 3D laser scanning may be employed for precise documentation.

In excavated sites there persists the ghost of the fill that remains to haunt the present hole. The excavated site will always be both states: unearthed and buried at the same time. Therefore the fill and the site together are always net zero. The fill is always enough for the hole, no more or no less. The earth becomes full of potential and also no potential, the site

is always a site and no site (just ground). The site remains "buried" always. Its excavated-ness is always held in suspension by the ghost of the fill.

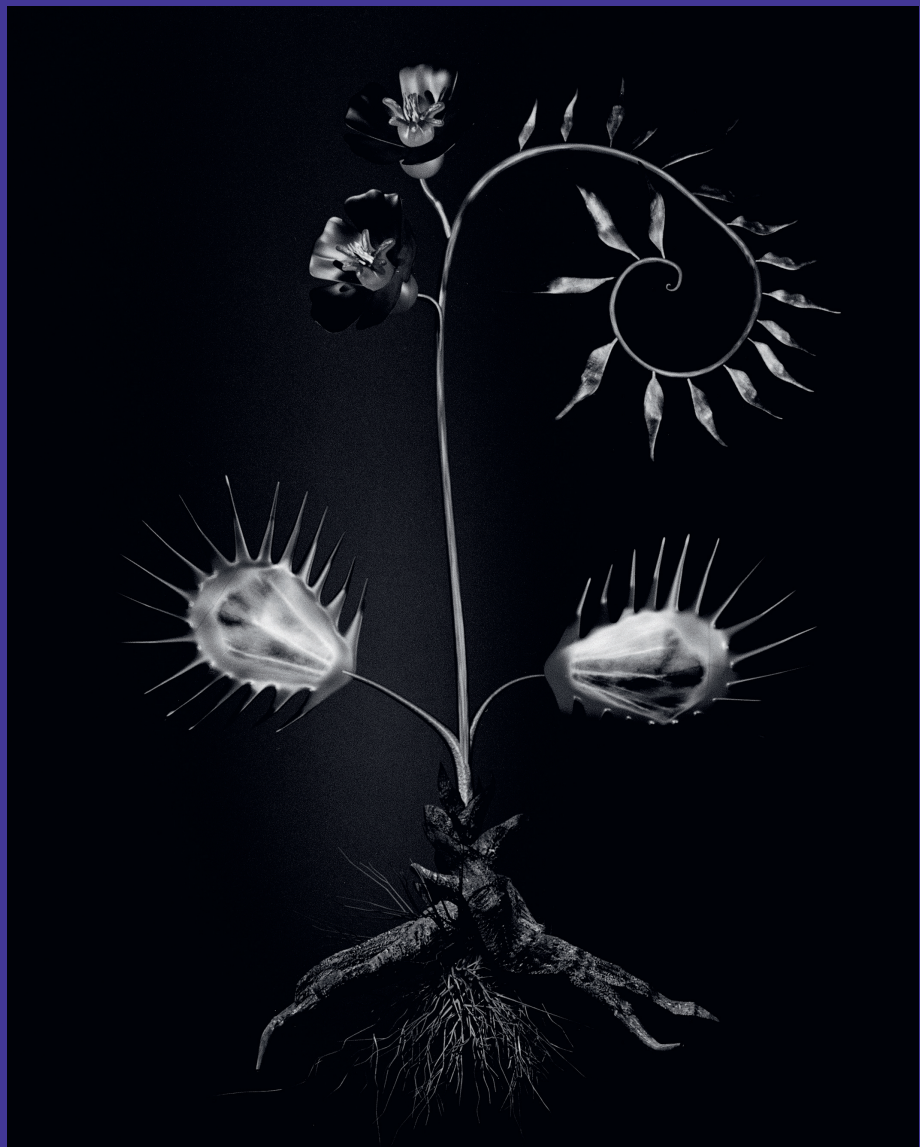
Cartesian space can contain infinities. The projection of limitlessness is essential to the metaphor of a 3D modeling software graphic interface.

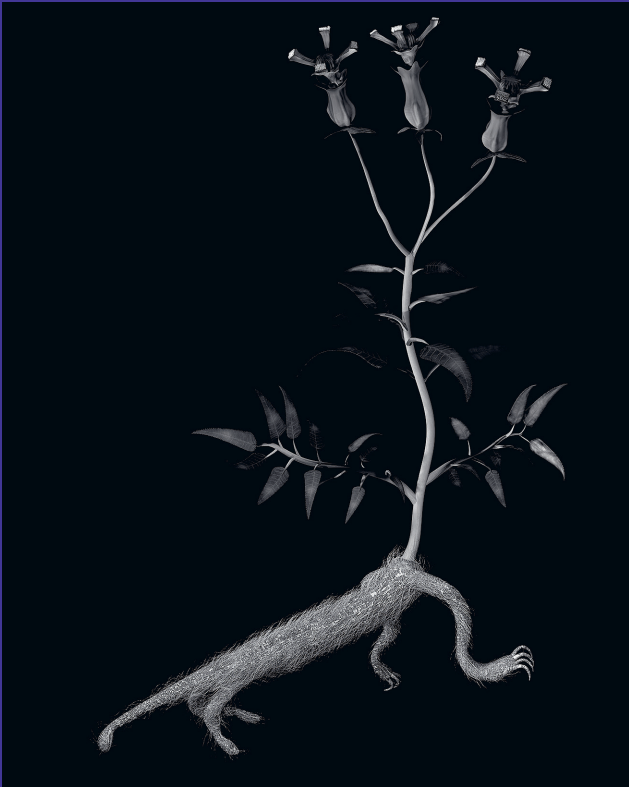
Vector graphics are composed of geometric shapes such as points, lines, curves, and polygons. These shapes are defined by mathematical equations and can be resized without the loss of quality. Because of their mathematical nature, vector images are resolution-independent.

A clipping plane is defined by a mathematical equation or a set of parameters that describe its position and orientation in 3D space. It is typically represented as a flat, infinite surface.

When rendering a 3D scene, each object in the scene is tested against one or more clipping planes to determine which parts of the object are within the view frustum (the portion of the scene that can be seen from the camera's perspective) and which parts are outside. The parts of the object that are outside of the clipping plane(s) are clipped or removed from the rendering process. This means that any portion of the object that lies on the side of the clipping plane opposite to the camera's viewpoint is effectively "cut off" and not displayed.

The domain of the view frustum is constrained by a computational threshold which is, in turn, constrained by the material limitation of the computer. The clipping plane is constructed by the software as a means to constrain the mathematical equations before it reaches its computational limit. This means that the infinite potentiality of the mathematical equation is delimited by its medium's material substrate. Abstraction has to contend with the materiality that constitutes its container.





The STAR CATALOGUE
A View From 55 Cancri e

A Catalogue of 123,663 Stars
Brighter than 9th Magnitude
as Viewed From the
55 Cancri/Copernicus System

as calculated by astronomer
ERIC MAMAJEK, Ph.D.

using stellar data from
The SIMBAD Database
Centre de Données
astronomiques de Strasbourg

ULRIK HELTOFT
MILJOHN RUPERTO
2023

HR	ID	α ICRS deg	δ ICRS deg	V mag	Spectral Type	ϖ mas	Color
107641	HD 198768	312.71850	46.38742	8.87	F0	4.58	white-yellow
107642	HD 198340	312.71936	-30.99150	8.50	F8V	7.35	white-yellow
107643	HD 197324	312.72001	-70.97092	8.58	F7V	7.74	white-yellow
107644	BD+06 4663	312.72020	5.74593	8.91	K0	2.54	light-orange
107645	HD 198354	312.72211	-25.61464	7.29	F6IV	15.00	white-yellow
107646	HD 198356	312.72381	-31.83869	6.53	K5III	4.61	light-orange
107647	HD 203317	312.72766	83.03495	8.46	F2	6.93	white-yellow
107648	HD 198444	312.72924	-15.08426	8.07	K0III	5.02	light-orange
107649	HD 198431	312.73001	-14.56297	6.16	K1III	10.28	light-orange
107650	BD+13 4541	312.73006	13.27627	8.79	K5	1.77	light-orange
107651	HD 198691	312.73425	34.29396	7.99	A0	2.51	white
107652	HD 198914	312.73525	57.65822	8.71	A0	2.27	white
107653	BD+40 4336	312.73556	39.72671	8.89	K0	2.22	light-orange
107654	HD 197922	312.73599	-66.01401	8.41	K0III	3.36	light-orange
107655	HD 198682	312.73672	33.00344	8.92	B9	1.19	white-blue
107656	HD 198551	312.74015	11.22885	8.45	K0	20.59	light-orange
107657	BD+35 4293	312.74083	34.91561	8.98	K0	1.52	light-orange
107658	HD 198819	312.74646	49.38866	7.68	A2	7.85	white
107659	HD 198446	312.74673	-17.53852	8.56	K1III	1.79	light-orange
107660	HD 198145	312.74805	-55.98544	8.82	F5Ib	3.90	white-yellow
107661	HD 198692	312.75895	31.69666	6.68	K0	4.75	light-orange
107662	HD 198462	312.76128	-18.09678	8.57	G6/8III	2.53	yellow-white
107663	BD+33 4056	312.76442	33.16642	8.47	K2	2.07	light-orange
107664	HD 353213	312.76592	16.71621	8.65	F2	2.59	white-yellow
107665	HD 198794	312.76823	44.66987	7.00	K3Ib	4.79	light-orange
107666	HD 197828	312.76900	-68.86973	8.30	A4/6V	4.33	white
107667	HD 198420	312.77224	-22.12383	7.40	F5V	9.21	white-yellow
107668	HD 75632B	312.77984	34.36102	8.34	M1V	113.58	orange-red
107669	HD 75632A	312.78050	34.31814	8.22	M1V	113.61	orange-red
107670	HD 198357	312.78281	-37.27055	5.65	K3III	5.35	light-orange
107671	HD 198461	312.78405	-16.76153	8.09	K3/4III	2.33	light-orange
107672	BD+12 4480	312.78532	11.86518	8.91	K5	2.54	light-orange
107673	BD+14 4446	312.78648	12.36543	8.60	K0	4.79	light-orange
107674	HD 198628	312.78913	14.87813	8.22	K2	2.32	light-orange
107675	HD 335252	312.79034	28.32843	8.93	M0	1.34	orange-red
107676	HD 200545	312.79766	75.26901	7.07	F2	12.95	white-yellow
107677	HD 198895	312.79945	54.67207	8.33	B1Ve	1.14	white-blue
107678	HD 198586	312.80112	1.84862	8.71	F0V	3.15	white-yellow
107679	BD+48 3224	312.81201	48.33205	9.00	A0	1.65	white
107680	HD 198449	312.81320	-25.70901	7.69	K0	3.66	light-orange
107681	HD 198833	312.82009	46.21083	7.16	G5	8.67	yellow-white
107682	BD+69 1134	312.82753	65.81543	8.82	F8	5.30	white-yellow
107683	HD 198384	312.83060	-38.21644	8.29	M1III	1.64	orange-red
107684	HD 198585	312.83240	0.47618	7.86	F5/6V	7.92	white-yellow
107685	HD 198383	312.83344	-37.63100	8.15	F2/3IV+A/F	5.12	white-yellow
107686	HD 353208	312.83847	16.71541	8.65	K0	2.84	light-orange
107687	HD 347567	312.83894	22.37264	8.65	G8	3.21	yellow-white
107688	BD+44 3602	312.84188	43.98275	8.82	K2II	1.54	light-orange
107689	HD 198555	312.84292	-8.27713	8.91	K2III	1.32	light-orange
107690	HD 198570	312.84516	-5.38239	8.46	B9V	3.73	white-blue
107691	HD 335245	312.84656	27.93039	8.37	K2	2.70	light-orange
107692	HD 198528	312.84894	-14.88167	7.75	F0V	5.34	white-yellow
107693	BD+36 4282	312.85071	35.97303	8.85	K5	1.59	light-orange
107694	HD 198466	312.85887	-27.18247	8.94	K2/3III	2.13	light-orange
107695	HD 198783	312.86172	37.80811	8.27	G5	2.76	yellow-white
107696	HD 347602	312.87166	21.83771	8.49	M0	1.41	orange-red
107697	T Vulpeculae	312.87349	27.24598	5.80	F5Ib+A0.8V	1.67	white-yellow
107698	HD 198785	312.87580	36.55863	8.82	A0	1.11	white
107699	HD 198930	312.87582	52.26778	8.39	A0	2.54	white
107700	HD 198520	312.87672	-21.25839	8.94	K1III	2.53	light-orange

HR	ID	α ICRS deg	δ ICRS deg	V mag	Spectral Type	ϖ mas	Color
107701	HD 198702	312.87821	23.92780	8.07	A3	5.87	white
107702	HD 347648	312.88262	20.51654	8.84	M0	1.22	orange-red
107703	HD 198784	312.88279	37.30874	7.28	B2V	1.03	white-blue
107704	HD 198797	312.88539	35.95174	8.09	F5III	5.15	white-yellow
107705	HD 198541	312.88935	-18.04332	7.94	K3III	3.96	light-orange
107706	HD 201748	312.89148	82.23169	8.45	F0	5.52	white-yellow
107707	HD 198298	312.89231	-48.24934	8.57	F3V	8.76	white-yellow
107708	HD 353149	312.89345	19.24072	8.78	K2	1.35	light-orange
107709	HD 198557	312.89720	-14.06047	8.43	K4III	1.71	light-orange
107710	HD 199329	312.90040	66.46158	8.26	F8	9.15	white-yellow
107711	HD 198858	312.90146	43.74628	7.40	K1III	5.66	light-orange
107712	4 Aquarii	312.90251	-9.46922	6.45	F7IV+F6:V:	13.80	white-yellow
107713	4 Aquarii A	312.90262	-9.47732	6.79	F7IV	13.82	white-yellow
107714	Indi	312.90387	-49.87469	5.20	K1II/III	6.08	light-orange
107715	HD 198571B	312.90435	-9.61246	7.82	F6:V:	14.31	white-yellow
107716	HD 198665	312.90517	9.90891	8.34	K2	2.70	light-orange
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107719	HD 198959	312.90797	52.03621	8.11	G0	6.02	yellow-white
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107721	HD 198769	312.91067	30.44047	8.97	A	3.37	white
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107732	HD 198192	312.94371	-59.51082	8.32	F5IV	4.84	white-yellow
107733	HD 197343	312.94408	-71.25447	8.45	F5V	12.46	white-yellow
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107747	CD-62 1338A	312.96911	-57.62509	6.51	A3IV(n)	11.87	white
107748	HD 199392	312.97004	69.00098	8.25	A2	5.77	white
107749	CD-62 1338B	312.97024	-57.61708	6.86	A3III	11.89	white
107750	HD 198685	312.97424	3.18441	8.44	G8/K0IV	3.18	yellow-white
107751	HD 198759	312.97685	17.10224	8.38	G0	8.59	yellow-white
107752	HD 198630	312.98750	-9.35761	8.92	K1III	1.32	light-orange
107753	HD 198704	312.98889	7.43092	6.87	K5	3.08	light-orange
107754	HD 198589	312.98919	-22.82092	8.90	K0III	1.68	light-orange
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107756	HD 198945	312.99490	47.46342	8.13	K0	3.15	light-orange
107757	HD 197808	312.99549	-67.01968	8.34	G3IV	12.97	yellow-white
107758	HD 198915	312.99552	44.90274	7.52	B6V	2.63	white-blue
107759	BD+37 4079	312.99608	37.25545	8.92	K0	0.73	light-orange
107760	HD 335229	313.00036	24.64048	8.95	F8	8.82	white-yellow

Saeculum

FOR NA MIRA AND SIMON
LEUNG, ON THEIR WORK
THE MOON SCRATCHES MY
HEART, A PERFORMANCE
AT ICA LA ON SATURDAY,
MAY 18, 2024

I'VE HEARD THAT THERE'S A KIND OF BIRD
WITHOUT LEGS THAT CAN ONLY FLY AND FLY,
AND SLEEP IN THE WIND WHEN IT IS TIRED.
THE BIRD ONLY LANDS ONCE IN ITS LIFE ...
THAT'S WHEN IT DIES.

— YUDDY (PLAYED BY LESLIE CHEUNG), *DAYS OF BEING
WILD*, 1990, WONG KAR-WAI (DIRECTOR)

Let us set two axis: Yuddy's story of a mythical bird in Wong Kar-wai's *Days of Being Wild* (an illustration of perpetual avoidance of entanglement resulting in isolation by constant motion and forward movement—being in time) and Homer's *The Iliad*, a text of lists, a tomb.

Let us also keep in mind that there are three temporalities happening at once. The time of Nature, eternal, inaccessible except through human mediation. Historical time, which is time made from that mediation. This is a shared human temporality. And there's subjective time, which is how one experiences time.

We will all die. When the last witness of an event dies, the duration from the event to the last death is called a saeculum. It is the ancient Roman term for generational forgetting.

Approaching Homer's *Iliad* as if it were a tomb, reading it feels like running your fingers along the crumbling reliefs of ancient heroes, tracing their faded images and names. Looking at the stone figures clash against each other in the depiction of long-lost war, we scan horizontally, the spatial movement suggesting a temporal movement, and the frieze reveals a narrative (a temporal operation) animating the dead.

Homer's *Iliad* is about an impasse. It takes place after a decade of undecided war between the Greeks and the Trojans. All that time, the Greeks have not gained any ground in their siege of Troy, and the Trojans have not been successful in repelling the invaders. Most of the epic describes the shifts of martial momentum back and forth from the Greeks to the Trojans, the war's resolution in perpetual suspension.

The main tension of the epic is not in the war between the two armies; the tension is between the uncertainty of life in unfolding time (mortality) and the meaning of a human life. Meaning is the quality of relation (between events and things) to values of the present. In other words, meaning is measured through the quality of entangled relations.

In the text, Homer represents this tension through the plot (a vertical temporal movement) versus descriptions of genealogical entanglements (a horizontal spatial expansion). *The Iliad* is

full of genealogical entanglements, an overwhelming number of descriptions of the dead's familial and historical context. As a result, the plot is mired (the forward temporal movement is slowed or halted) by the descriptions of the messy entangled relational context of a person to other persons, places, and things. Each description offers up an image of a world that is lost with the death of another soldier. This labor of holding on to a memory, grasping on a state now passed, against the unfolding of time, can be called grief.

The highest value in the epic is κλέος ἄφθιτον, *kleos aphthiton*, or unwilted—immortal glory. The default then is that glory eventually wilts, like the tombs of the great kings described in the text—even those decay and are forgotten. Time eventually destroys all that humans have built. Glory, like all things human, is mortal. The aspiration to immortality is an existential response to the contingency of unfolding time. But dreams, values, concepts, thoughts are ultimately bounded to a materiality that moves through time: the bodies of persons and of peoples. So when the people die, dreams, values, and concepts die along with them. The mortal horizon of the human world forecloses immortality. So escape from contingency remains an aspiration.

The written epic itself describes a world of orality that will soon be gone, being the thing that replaces that world. Through writing, Homer imbues not only people but objects as well with this power of persistence. An object can contain an ocean of relations in a world that is fading. Homer expands his description of Achilles's shield to include not only its material features but also the depiction of towns and peoples, histories and events, upon it. The description feels elliptical, pointing toward a world with qualities expanding outwardly to the infinite. In writing the epic, Homer contributes to an ending of orality as the tradition of remembering.

Regarding the permanence of writing, the dream of immortality inches forward, but the gulf toward its actualization is still forever. And like the hubristic tombs of ancient kings, writing as a tradition of remembering will eventually wilt against the scale of expansive eternity.

Memorials are rituals that reveal the values we wish to preserve, which in turn reveal what we want ourselves to mean: what we think is a human life. We are temporal creatures. The potentiality of our lives are tied to the unpredictability

of unfolding time. When we die, this potentiality ceases. In a memorial ritual, we collectively reanimate the potentiality of the deceased through piecing together memories of subjective histories (relations unknown to and separate from each other) into a shared history, affirming their entanglement. The previously unknown, when revealed and shared, resonates with what was once the potentiality of a life before its end. The sharing of stories articulates the effect the deceased had upon the world. The ritual then tethers that world to the deceased and releases both back to the contingency of the temporal flow. This acknowledgment marks the saeculum.

The epic begins with a withholding of what is due and ends with a giving of what is due: Achilles surrendering Hector's violently desecrated body to the dead hero's father, Priam. Priam's despair ceases when he discovers divine intervention has preserved the beauty of his son, allowing the hero proper funerary rites. We must give the dead what they are due with the memorial: where articulating their past entanglement with the world reveals what their lives meant.

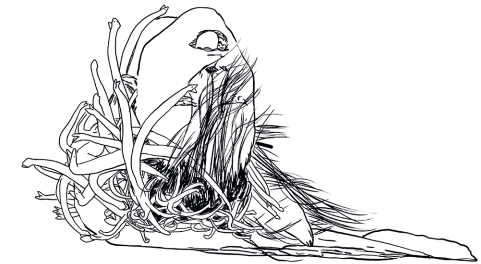
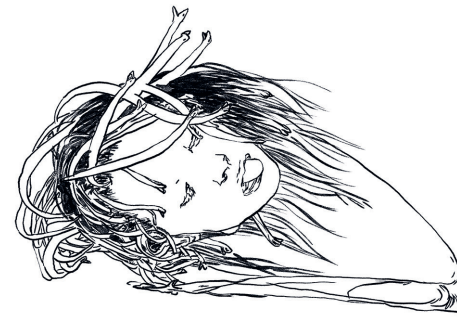


*The insistence on persistence in face of expansive time has led to art forms (the expression of our values) that attempt to control for the contingency of time. We can categorize these art forms as recordings—art forms with persistence in mind. Like performances, we experience these art forms in time. But unlike performances, in repetition, recordings increasingly (with each unfolding) dampen the likelihood of contingency.

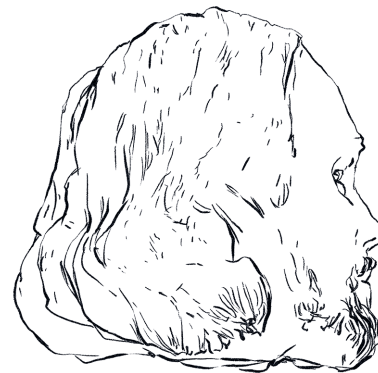
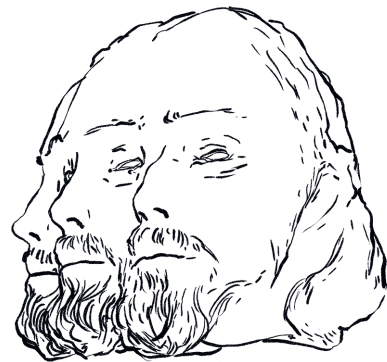
THIS TEXT WAS PARTLY INSPIRED BY LORENZO F. GARCIA JR., *HOMERIC DURABILITY: TELLING TIME IN THE ILIAD*, HELLENIC STUDIES SERIES 58 (CENTER FOR HELLENIC STUDIES, 2013).

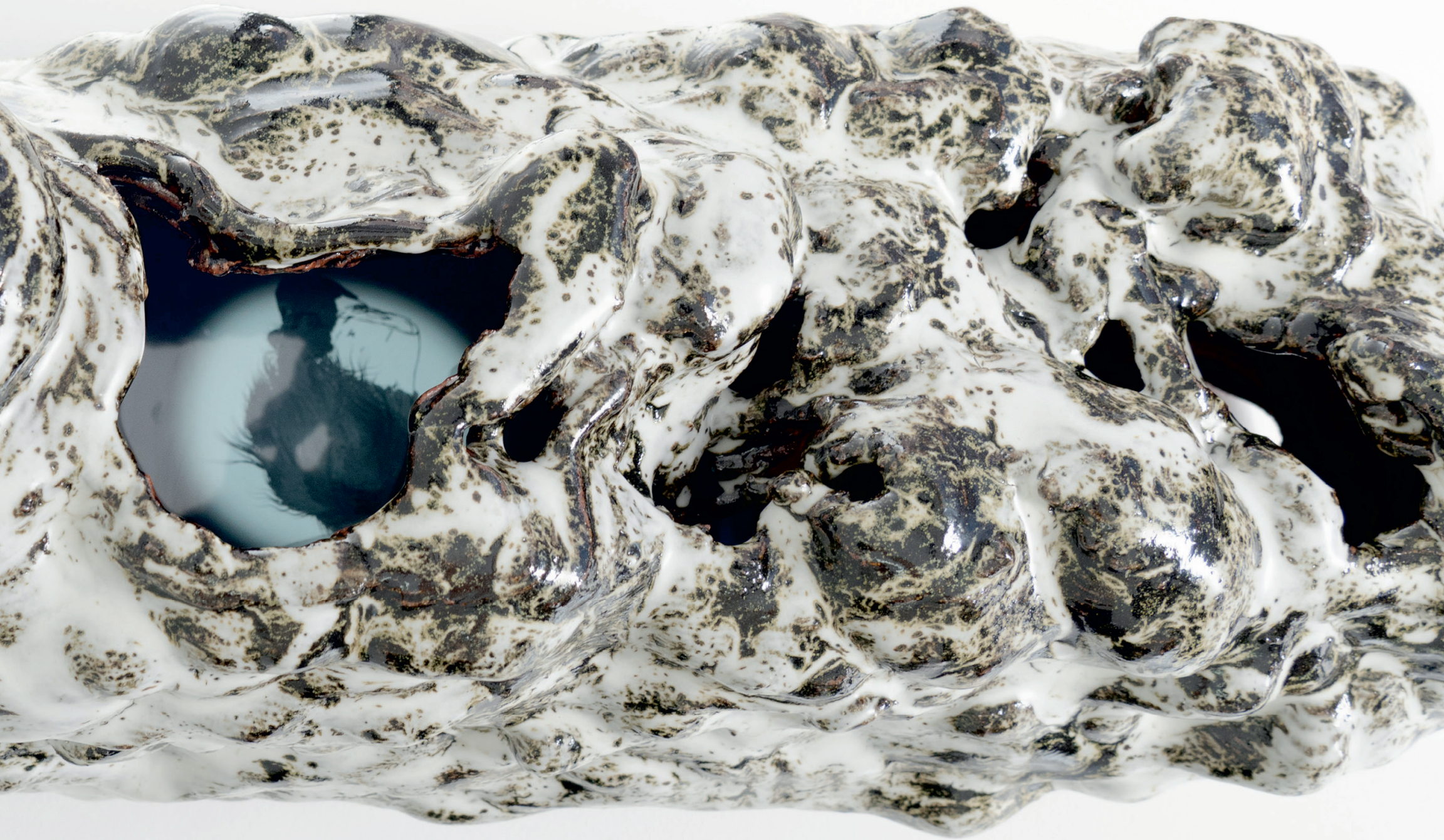
Miljohn Ruperto and Candice Lin, *The Corpse*, from the series *Putrefaction*,
2024. 3D printed ceramic and high fire glaze, Head: 5 x 12 x 16 in. (12.7 x
30.48 x 40.64 cm); Middle: 4.25 x 14.5 x 19.5 in. (10.80 x 36.83 x 49.53 cm);
Tail: 5.5 x 10 x 15.25 in. (13.97 x 25.4 x 38.74 cm)





Miljohn Ruperto, The Baroque is a Geometric Imposition Upon Wild Nature, 2024. Video animation (B&W, no sound), 3 sec., looped; (facing) Miljohn Ruperto and Candice Lin, The Corpse from the series Putrefaction, 2024. 3D printed ceramic and high fire glaze, Head: 5 x 12 x 16 in. (12.7 x 30.48 x 40.64 cm); Middle: 4.25 x 14.5 x 19.5 in. (10.80 x 36.83 x 49.53 cm); Tail: 5.5 x 10 x 15.25 in. (13.97 x 25.4 x 38.74 cm); Inside: Candice Lin, Demon Hello, 2022. Video animation (B&W, no sound), 4 sec., looped

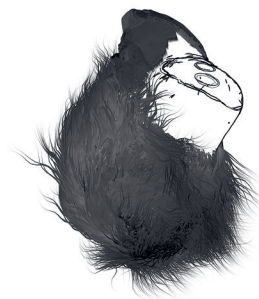




Miljohn Ruperto and Candice Lin, Rolling Head (durational collapse)
from the series Putrefaction, 2024. 3D printed ceramic and high fire glaze,
10 × 8 × 26 in. (25.4 × 20.3 × 66 cm); Inside: Miljohn Ruperto, History Awaits
Immanence, 2024. Video animation (B&W, no sound), 3 sec., looped



Miljohn Ruperto and Candice Lin, Rolling Head (durational collapse) from the series Putrefaction, 2024. 3D printed ceramic and high fire glaze, 10 x 8 x 26 in. (25.4 x 20.3 x 66 cm)



Miljohn Ruperto, History Awaits Immanence, 2024. Video animation (B&W, no sound), 3 sec., looped

Kalibutan

For Patrick Flores on his text Sensible Form: Essays

SO THERE: THE EARTHY, ETHEREAL SUBLIME
IS VIOLENT, DELICATE, PRECIOUS AS IT IS
PRECARIOUS; THE WORLD IS A FIGURINE LIKE
THE PHILIPPINE—READY TO CRACK, READY
TO GATHER LIKE ISLANDS.

— PATRICK FLORES, "METAMORPHIC HISTORIES," 2014

I. PALIMPSEST

First, three things.

Let us keep in mind the power of naming. In spatial terms, naming delineates (portions off; an abstract operation) a category (defined by qualities) from the expansive entangled world to invent a discrete object. In temporal terms, naming portions off from a temporal unfolding flow to create a discrete duration, an event. Names are provisional in both time and space. The unnamed in the temporal flow is contingency (the unpredicted event or rupture), the unnamed in space is the unknown territory. Their totality is Nature. Nature contains everything unaccounted.

Let's also keep in mind that in talking about time, or even thinking about it, we are arresting time. Conceptualizing is seizing a state in the temporal flow, creating an instance outside of time. So when we think about time, we are already outside of it. When we think, we use being in the temporal flow to explore or compare static conceptual states. We generally understand time as change over time. Note that comparing states is never being in time, or being in a temporal flow. The best we can do is to create an operational account of the

dynamic changes of states. In the most basic sense this is narrative: a sequential description of how states change over time. We can imagine narratives as a conceptual way to store time. This is how narratives became our fundamental way to understand temporality.

Lastly, entrenched power insists on a reality/world in which it dominates. The more it can insist (convincing others of its authority), the more it solidifies its power. Therefore if it can intensify the fragmentation and isolation of other possible realities, the less chance for coalescence to occur, and therefore the less possibility for competition to arise.

II. KALIBUTAN

AFTER ALL, IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE VISAYAS,
THE CENTRAL ISLANDS OF THE PHILIPPINE
ARCHIPELAGO, THE WORD KALIBUTAN IS AT
ONCE COSMOS AND INTELLECTION,
AROUND-NESS AND AWARENESS: MIND-SPACE,
WORLD-HISTORY, HOVERING LIKE A REALM.

— PATRICK FLORES, *SENSIBLE FORM: ESSAYS*, 2025

The Visayan word *kalibutan* means both world and consciousness.

In the axis of temporality, there are two worlds: the world inherited (the present) and the world emergent (the future). Eventually, the future becomes the present and a new world emergent comes at the ready. To continue, structures in the world inherited must be seized and dragged to become realized in the world emergent. When we speak of "world" we must always discern between the two.

Entrenched power dominates the world inherited. This is a spatial domination but not a temporal one. The attempt at temporal domination happens when entrenched power creates a system of automation to help transition its spatial configuration (image) to the world emergent. This system of automation is called causality. Entrenched power first insists that the substrate of both the world inherited and the world

emergent is spatial, rendering time as inconsequential and flattening the difference between the world inherited and the world emergent. Less difference means better. When this does not work and contingency inevitably appears, entrenched power insists that causality governs time. We become convinced in the primacy of causality (which gives us stability) and become avoidant of contingency (which brings instability). This is the logic of probability, where contingency is measured negatively, outside of control.

Let us borrow a compelling Western philosophical idea of consciousness as the unfolding relation (entanglement) between subjects. Consciousness is formed through encounter and mediation with others. Most importantly, consciousness is bounded in contingency; it emerges (a temporal operation) out of the negotiation between subjects. This is a shared collective creation of a world. It is the core operation of creating a reality. Consciousness, then, is bound in the act of world-building in time. It is the active process of bringing about a world emergent.

Entrenched power's compelling narrative of causality hides the great effort it requires to drag the world inherited to replace the world emergent. This effort is distributed and pegged to the overall saturation of belief in determinism. The more people believe, the more the effort is distributed, the more automatic this operation becomes. If narrative is a way for us to account the changing of states in time, this narrative of causality is temporally anemic.

A counter-narrative would be the open narrative of consciousness (of dynamic relations), in which inter-subject negotiations coalesce the world emergent into being.

We can call this narrative of dynamism the narrative of potentiality. This narrative is charged with contingency's potentiality: of rupture, of surprise, of unaccounted possibility.

III. A FRAGILE ETHICAL UNIVERSE

Today, the active dissipation of coalescing realities is achieved through the program of hyper-individuation, encapsulating potential world-building within the subject's interiority. Participating in bringing out the world emergent is not important; what is important is building your own world uncompromised. Siloing worlds and keeping them separated has been pushed as an important value; i.e., expressing the particularity of oneself has become regarded as emancipatory and evidence of ultimate agency. In terms of world-building, the best outcome for the expression of these interior worlds outwardly is when they are given form through the subject's own consumerism, or when these hermetic singular worlds can be commodified and consumed by others as novel aesthetic experiences. Artists are complicit in this.

Fortunately, entrenched power's domain is in the spatial; it has only a tentative hold on time. A temporally minded approach can wrest away the power of reality-making from the narrative of causality. In *Sensible Form*, Flores reminds us of how consciousness brings forth worlds based on a shared and negotiated commons. The collection of writings presents Flores's way through the world (a mindfulness) as a suturing of narratives of potentiality, cultivating this consciousness with great care to coalesce it into a charged momentum that brings about a world emergent. Kalibutan, then, is an operational term: consciousness being collectively willed into world.



Miljohn Ruperto, *Ultimate Days (Aion)* from the series *The Great Disappointment*, 2026–ongoing. Camera obscura with day-to-night landscape simulation (color, no sound), 24:00:00 hrs.

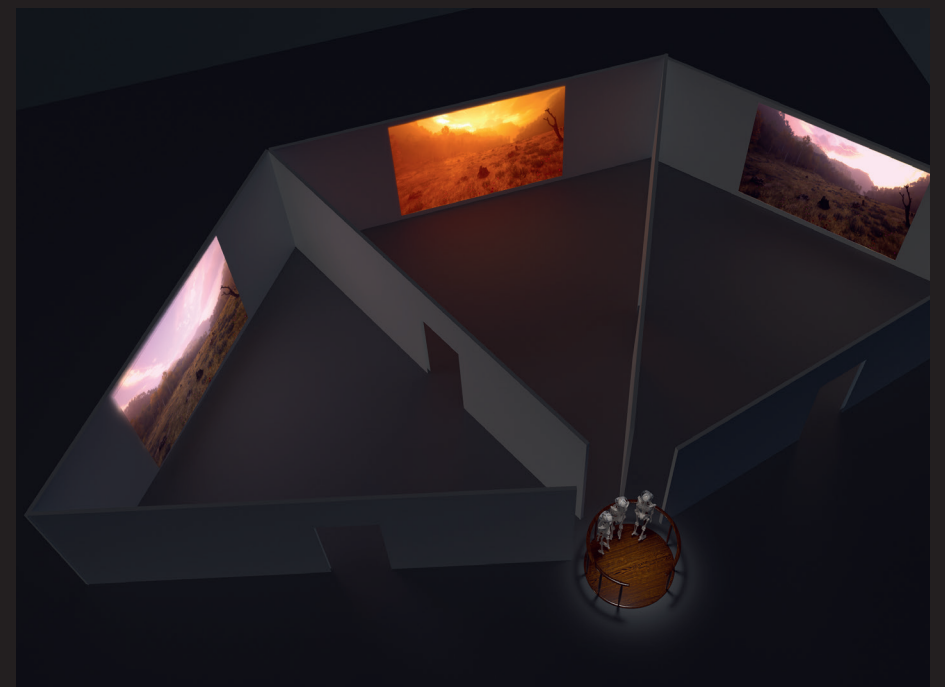
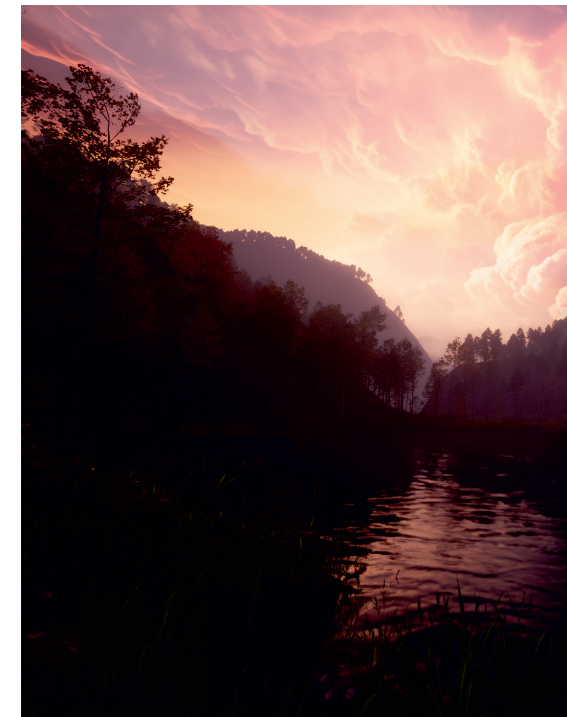


Miljohn Ruperto and Vishal Jugdeo, Cut Line, 2024. Three channel 4K video (color, sound), 26:00 min.





Miljojn Ruperto, What God Hath Wrought (Kairros)
from the series The Great Disappointment, 2026—ongoing.
Three animations with a VR component (color, sound)



(above) Miljohn Ruperto, *What God Hath Wrought (Kairos)* from the series *The Great Disappointment*, 2026–ongoing. Three animations with a VR component (color, sound)

(below) Artist renderings, *What God Hath Wrought (Kairos)*, 2025



Apeiophobia /Aporia

Reflections on an exhibition
organized by Sohrab Mohebbi
and Miljohn Ruperto at Human
Resources, Los Angeles,
July 1–31, 2016

WITH:

MICHEL AUDER
JULIE BECKER
DAVID BERNSTEIN
JENNIFER BOLANDE
CLIFF BORRESS
QUYNH DONG
SHAHAB FOTOUHI
ULRIK HELTOFT

JOEL HOLMBERG
HASSAN KHAN
LAURA OWENS
ASHA SCHECHTER
DINEO SESHEE BOPAPE
MARIA TANIGUCHI
ALICE WANG
BRENT WATANABE

MILJOHN Do you remember in 2016 when we curated the show *Apeiophobia/Aporia* in LA? Do you remember how the show came to be?

SOHRAB I think it came from our conversations regarding the tension between curatorial framing and a work's autonomy and how we could think through this issue in the field. In a basic way, how works can be featured in different exhibitions, under different thematics and in relation to different works and contexts on the one hand, and also how the categorization is a way to limit the potentiality of the work or to instrumentalize it to illustrate a curatorial concept. Our

experiment was to see if we can have one selection of works that spread across two exhibitions. It has been a while, but this is a question I have explored in my work further and go back to constantly. Does this capture our conversation? How do you remember it?

MILJOHN I think you're right. I remember it starting with trusting that art objects, like all objects, are inexhaustible. What seemed to deaden works was more of an issue with the structures of meaning overlaid upon the works not being nimble enough to follow the objects through time. If curatorial concepts cannot follow the objects through time, then maybe we can expand the concepts horizontally and show the potentiality of a configuration.

Then we laughed at the emerging joke premise: What if we had a 2-for-1 show—two separate and independent curatorial overlays over one constellation of works.

First we would keep our curatorial concepts hidden from each other. Then, separately, we would choose an art object and send each other a picture and a short description/context. The other person would say yes or no. If yes, it goes into the show without the other person having access to the criteria of the choice.

We then had two curatorial umbrellas for a constellation of art objects. The title of yours was *Aporia* and mine ended up being *Apeiophobia*.

Years later, we found a compelling rhyme with the model of Suzhou embroidery, where two artists, face to face, work upon a translucent silk cloth between them. The artists are both constrained by a shared contour and a process (they share a needle between them shuttling back and forth). The process requires constant negotiation to produce two images sharing the same silhouette.

I'm also reminded of a Borges story called "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*," in which a critic writes about an author he discovered who attempted to write *Don Quixote*. And the critic would compare passages, one from Cervantes and the other from Pierre Menard. The passage is the same, but the addition of multiple contexts/worlds generates new meanings. It's a joke on tautology: Object stability does not presuppose the stability (singularity) of the ground.

CURATOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Early in my conversations with Miljohn about putting together an exhibition and a book, he asked me what I hoped to get out of it. It took dedicated labor and generous support from many colleagues, collaborators, and friends to achieve my ambitious goal of putting together “just a really cool show.”

First and foremost, I'd like to thank Veronica Roberts, John and Jill Freidenrich Director at the Cantor Arts Center, for recognizing this project's potential to speak to the interdisciplinary strengths of our campus and Bay Area communities, giving the project the go-ahead, and providing ongoing and enthusiastic support and mentorship. I'd also like to thank Marion Gill, Christina Linden, Magdelana Reyes, and Yael Eytan for their guidance and assistance in the areas they oversee at the museum, as well as Deborah Cullinan and Anne Shulock for their inspirational leadership of Stanford Arts.

While all my colleagues at the Cantor deserve thanks for the herculean efforts they have made and will yet make to present this exhibition, Katie Clifford, Stefanie Midlock, and Isabelle Rogers are due special thanks for their critical registration work, as is Brooks Manbeck for tedious technical planning and an inspired exhibition design. Many thanks to exhibitions and publications project manager Lily Soogrim—without you, this book, not to mention the exhibition, would never have gotten off the ground, much less out the door. Big thanks go to Becca Lofchie for seeing the vision and producing the coolest book design.

This exhibition and publication have afforded me some of the most exciting opportunities of my time at Stanford and as part of the Bay Area arts ecosystem. Thank you to the team at Minnesota Street Project Foundation, the teams at Stanford's Virtual Human Interaction Lab and Stanford Robotics Center, professor Hideo Mabuchi, and my intern Duc Dinh (Stanford '25) for essential help bringing new artworks to life.

I'd like to extend my deepest of thanks to my friends and colleagues who provided indispensable feedback, both kind and constructive, on drafts of my essay: Vivian Sming, Joanna García Cherán, and Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander. I would also like to thank Aleesa in her role as co-director of Stanford's Asian American Art Initiative, Marci Kwon, AAI co-director, and

Kathryn Cua, curatorial assistant for the AAI, for their trust in me. It's a privilege to contribute exhibitions such as this one to support the initiative's vital mission of advancing research, education, community engagement, and public access to the work of Asian American and Asian diasporic artists and makers.

This project would never have happened if not for Micki Meng, who introduced me to Miljohn and his work and who provided crucial support of this exhibition as his gallerist.

My greatest thanks go to Miljohn and his collaborators. Miljohn, ever since our first conversation, you've made my brain buzz. Your clever humor and dazzling, deeply philosophical intellect have made this project a thrill to be a part of. You are what make this show and this book so very cool. Thank you for your collaboration, friendship, and trust.

Nothing I do would be possible without my loving family. I'd like to especially thank my aunt and uncle, Amy Corton and Carl Eibl, for supporting the commission of new work for this exhibition; my mother, Genie Dethloff, my most devoted champion; and my late father, Lloyd Dethloff, whose steadfast care and encouragement continue to sustain me.

ARTIST'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

All artworks courtesy of the artists and Micki Meng Gallery, San Francisco, unless otherwise noted.

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971) and Ulrik Heltoft (Danish, born in 1973)

Voynich Botanical Studies, 2012–ongoing
Gelatin silver prints on fiber-based paper, 15.75 × 19.69 in. (40 × 50 cm)
Courtesy of the artists, Micki Meng Gallery, San Francisco, and Gallery Vacancy, Shanghai
Specimen 05v Leto, 2023
Specimen 13r Leto, 2024
Specimen 16r Leto, 2024
Specimen 23v Leto, 2017 (page 55)
Specimen 32v Leto, 2023
Specimen 35v Leto, 2024
Specimen 36r Jaro, 2023
Specimen 49r Leto, 2023
Specimen 50v Leto, 2023
Specimen 56r Zima, 2016
Specimen 87v Leto, 2023
Specimen 90v Jaro, 2013 (page 54)

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971)

Seven and Five, 2012
7 channel video installation (color, sound), 21:30 min., with 7 CRT monitors on pedestals and 5 oil paintings, 43.3 × 67.52 in. (110 cm × 171.5 cm) (each)
Co-directed by Ruben Obregon (American, born in 1969)
Paintings by Huidan Art, Dafen Village, Shenzhen, China
Photograph credit: Lee Thompson, courtesy of Thomas Solomon
Pages 40–43

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971)

Janus, 2014
4K video (color, sound), 3:30 min., looped
Animated by Aimée de Jongh (Dutch, born in 1988)
Pages 7, 22–23

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971) and Aimée de Jongh (Dutch, born in 1988)

Mineral Monsters, 2014
8 channel video installation (color, no sound), 2-frame animations, looped
Neuroscience consulting by Rajan Bhattacharyya
Pages 10, 44–45

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971)

Demonology: Pazuzu, 2015
Lenticular print, 16 × 20 in. (40.64 × 76.2 cm)
Page 2

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971)

Re-animating “Valley Turbulence” by Sam Chase, 2015
Video (color, no sound), 8 sec., looped
Photograph credit: Erica Wilcox
Pages 38–39

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971) and Rini Yun Matea (American, born in 1971)

Ordinal (SW/NE), 2017
Video (color, sound), 43:05 min.
Pages 11, 12, 24–27

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971) and Ulrik Heltoft (Danish, born in 1973)

The STAR CATALOGUE A View From 55 Cancr i e, 2023
Book, 8.5 × 11 × 3 1/8 in. (21.59 × 27.94 × 7.94 cm)
Star positions calculated by astronomer Eric Mamajek, PhD
Pages 56–59

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971) and Vishal Jugdeo (Canadian, born in 1979)

Cut Line, 2024
Three channel 4K video (color, sound), 26:00 min.
Installation view, Scratching at the Moon, Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, February 10–July 28, 2024. Photo: Jeff McLane / ICA LA.
Pages 15, 80–83

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971) and Candice Lin (American, born in 1979)

Rolling Head (durational collapse) from the series Putrefaction, 2024
3D printed ceramic and high fire glaze, 10 × 8 × 26 in. (25.4 × 20.3 × 66 cm)
3D printing by gene aguilar magaña
Courtesy of the artist, Micki Meng Gallery, San Francisco, and François Ghebaly, Los Angeles | New York

Inside:

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971)

History Awaits Immanence, 2024
Video animation (B&W, no sound), 3 sec., looped

Pages 70–73

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971) and Candice Lin (American, born in 1979)

The Corpse from the series Putrefaction, 2024
3D printed ceramic and high fire glaze, Head: 5 × 12 × 16 in. (12.7 × 30.48 × 40.64 cm); Middle: 4.25 × 14.5 × 19.5 in. (10.80 × 36.83 × 49.53 cm); Tail: 5.5 × 10 × 15.25 in. (13.97 × 25.4 × 38.74 cm)
3D printing by gene aguilar magaña
Courtesy of the artists, Micki Meng Gallery, San Francisco, and François Ghebaly, Los Angeles | New York

Inside:

Candice Lin (American, born in 1979)

Demon Hello, 2022
Video animation (B&W, no sound), 4 sec., looped
Courtesy of the artist, Micki Meng Gallery, San Francisco, and François Ghebaly, Los Angeles | New York

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971)

The Baroque is a Geometric Imposition Upon Wild Nature, 2024
Video animation (B&W, no sound), 3 sec., looped

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971)

Western Temporalities Incline Towards a Tripartite Structure, 2024
Video animation (B&W, no sound), 3 sec., looped

Pages 10, 64–69

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971) and Daniel Small (American, born in 1984)

Fathoms (Tartarapelagic), 2025–26
Single channel digital simulation (color, no sound), continuous duration
Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning Research by Kavish Kapoor
Pages 46–47

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971)

What God Hath Wrought (Kairos) from the series The Great Disappointment, 2026–ongoing
Three animations with a VR component (color, sound)
Creative direction and CG by Jay H. Patel (Kenyan, born in 1990)
Choreography by Lisa Müller-Trede
Motion-capture movement by Lisa Müller-Trede and Duc Dinh
Sound by Daniel Oldham (American, born in 1993)
Pages 15, 84–87

Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971)

The Great Disappointment (Chronos) from the series The Great Disappointment, 2026–ongoing
Screenplay, 8 1/2 × 11 in. (21.59 × 27.94 cm)
Script by Jean Shin (American, born in 1977) and Michael Vazquez (American, born in 1969)
Not pictured

***Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971)**

Ultimate Days (Aion) from the series The Great Disappointment, 2026–ongoing
Camera obscura with day-to-night landscape simulation (color, no sound), 24:00:00 hrs.
Creative direction and CG by Jay H. Patel (Kenyan, born in 1990)
Optics consulting by Hideo Mabuchi (American, born in 1971)
Pages 78–79

***Miljohn Ruperto (American, born in the Philippines, 1971) and Patrick Eleazar (American, born in 1972)**

The New Society, 2026
4k video (color, sound)
Script co-written by Asher Hartman (American, born in 1959)
Sound and music by Daniel Oldham (American, born in 1993)
Pages 88–89

*In conjunction with the exhibition at the Cantor Arts Center, the Cantor has partnered with the Minnesota Street Project Foundation to present a concurrent exhibition of Ruperto’s work, Miljohn Ruperto: Ultimate Days, March 14–April 18, 2026, featuring these two artworks.

This publication accompanies [Animal, Vegetable, nor Mineral: Works by Miljohn Ruperto](#), an exhibition held at the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for the Visual Arts, Stanford University, from March 12 to September 14, 2026.

This exhibition was organized by the Cantor Arts Center and curated by Maggie Dethloff, Assistant Curator of Photography and New Media. We gratefully acknowledge generous support for [Animal, Vegetable, nor Mineral: Works by Miljohn Ruperto](#) provided by Sue and John Diekman, with additional support provided by Amy Corton and Carl Eibl, and Genie Dethloff. Sustained support generously provided by Megan O'Reilly Lewis and Todd Lewis, The Darle and Patrick Maveety Fund for Asian Art, The Constance Corcoran Miller Fund for Academic Initiatives, The Khoan and Michael Sullivan Fund, and The Phyllis Wattis Program Fund.

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Asian American Art Initiative

The Asian American Art Initiative (AAAI) advances research, education, community engagement, and public access to the work of Asian American/diasporic artists and makers. Primarily based at the Cantor Arts Center, the AAAI strives to build one of the most significant museum collections of Asian American art and make it available to all through the museum's curatorial program. The AAAI models an innovative art history that centers primary sources (works of art, archives, oral histories) to generate collaboration among artists, scholars, students, and community members; and across the museum, classroom, archive, and public.

Front cover: Miljohn Ruperto and Ulrik Heltoft, [Voynich Botanical Studies, Specimen 23r Zima](#), 2013. Gelatin silver print on fiber-based paper, 15.75 x 19.69 in. (40 x 50 cm)

Back cover: Miljohn Ruperto and Ulrik Heltoft, [Voynich Botanical Studies, Specimen 56v Jaro](#), 2013. Gelatin silver print on fiber-based paper, 15.75 x 19.69 in. (40 x 50 cm)

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