



Flesh Witness

• Bernice Akamine, Lani Asunción, Pelenakeke Brown, Crystal Z Campbell, Jisoo Chung, Sean Connelly, Kyuri Jeon, Jane Jin Kaisen, Mao Ishikawa, Slow Futures Laboratory, Stephanie Syjuco

ART

SEP 12 - DEC 13

THU-FRI, 3-10 PM;

SAT-SUN, 12-6 PM



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REDCAT

ROY AND EDNA DISNEY
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ABOUT

Flesh Witness brings together contemporary artists whose work examines global histories and ongoing conditions of militarism across Asia and the Pacific. Focusing on Hawai'i, Korea, Okinawa, the Philippines, and Samoa, the group exhibition includes artworks spanning from the 1970s to newly created work, ranging from video to sculpture, photography, mixed media, and installation that considers how military power is inscribed in landscapes, bodies, and archives.

The exhibition takes its title from participating artist Kyuri Jeon's video work, *산증인 / 活證人*, *The Flesh-Witness*, which revisits American archival documentation of Korean War prisoners who were forcibly tattooed with anti-communist slogans. The artists in *Flesh Witness* recover and reinterpret such inscriptions of power embedded in official state footage, newspaper archives, photographs, naming conventions, plants, and coastlines, revealing the intervention and occupation that established and maintained imperial dominance throughout the region.

Throughout the exhibition, artists foreground intergenerational memory, Indigenous knowledge beyond official histories and archives, and practices of ecological stewardship and activism that support communities living with the ongoing effects of militarized occupation. In a moment marked by border violence, territorial occupation, genocide, and ecological crisis, these artists reimagine the Pacific region through the intersecting legacies of military imperialism.

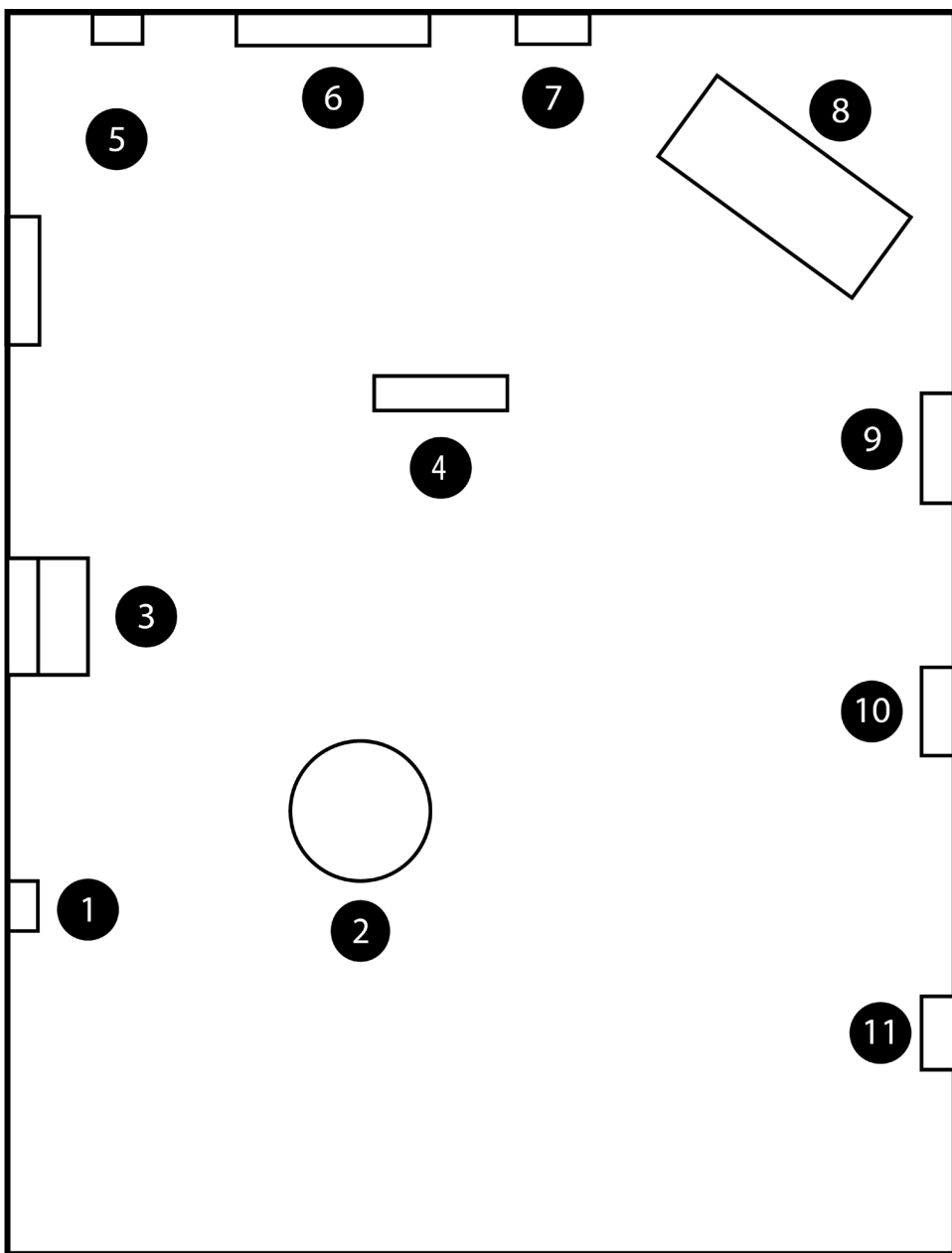
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Presented in Los Angeles, a city historically influenced by transpacific migration and military infrastructure, the exhibition envisions new shared futures of Oceanic peoples and diasporas.

Flesh Witness is organized by REDCAT guest curators GYOPO and Amy Kahng, with support from Katy Dammers, Deputy Director and Chief Curator and Kyla Kim, Getty Marrow Curatorial Intern.

Thank you to those who lent their materials and support including Ka'iulani Akamine, Elise Armani, Christina Ayson-Plank, Rian Chandra, Tony Cho, Alison Bradley Gallery, Rivalry Projects, Sasha Sabherwal, POETIC SCAPE, Gabriella Shypula, and Silverlens.

Photo: Courtesy of Jane Jin Kaisen. Still from Burial of This Order, 2022.



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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

① BERNICE AKAMINE

Papahanaumoku, 2018

Spent bullet casings, glass and 'ālaea, Hawaiian earth pigments

Courtesy of the artist

Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) and Japanese American artist Bernice Akamine created *Papahanaumoku* as a response to the false ballistic missile alert sent across Hawai'i in 2018, which brought renewed attention to the islands' vulnerability as a host of U.S. military bases in the Pacific. Akamine replaced the tops of spent bullet casings with fragile glass and filled them with 'ālaea (Hawaiian clay), gathered from various military installations throughout the Hawaiian Islands. The work speaks to the desecration of sacred sites as well as the environmental effects of military activity, including munitions contamination that seeps into the groundwater and the impacts of naval sonar and weapons testing on marine ecosystems. These delicate sculptures, once materials of warfare, now suggest regrowth and other possible futures for occupied land.

② SLOW FUTURES LABORATORY

Traces of an Island, 2026

Ceramic clay object, photograph mounted on foam board, photograph printed on fine art paper, basswood, digital map mounted on MDF and Plywood

Courtesy of the artist

Traces of an Island focuses on Muui-indo, a former island off the coast of Gunsan, South Korea, that was home to Haje Village and a once-thriving port and fishing community, now displaced by U.S. military development of nearby munitions storage areas and drained by the Saemangeum Seawall—a land reclamation project that turned the estuary tidal flat into an agricultural and urban hub. Through the ghostly traces and visible remnants of Muui-indo's former community and ecological life, *Traces of an Island* considers what this space might have been without recent military, industrial, and natural devastation. The sculptural installation interweaves photographs, carvings, and models—of historical and contemporary coastal life, military expansion, and economic displacement—folding together past and present to disrupt the linear temporality of development.

③ **JISOO CHUNG**

Dear Misses Kims, 2024

Letter from Stevie — National Gymnastics

Acrylic gouache on image-transferred photographs of Miss Kim Lilac
herbarium specimens, aquarelle paper, pencil, and wood

Courtesy of the artist

Letter from Jeeho — Fiddlehead Hands

Acrylic gouache on image-transferred photographs of Miss Kim Lilac
herbarium specimens, aquarelle paper, pencil, and wood

Courtesy of the artist

Letter from Dajin — Untitled

Acrylic gouache on image-transferred photographs of Miss Kim Lilac
herbarium specimens, aquarelle paper, pencil, and wood

Courtesy of the artist

Letter from Chaeyoung — Kim Hwa Won

Acrylic gouache on image-transferred photographs of Miss Kim Lilac
herbarium specimens, aquarelle paper, pencil, and wood

Courtesy of Amy Kahng

Letter from Jungmok — Trumpet Playing Babies

Acrylic gouache on image-transferred photographs of Miss Kim Lilac

herbarium specimens, aquarelle paper, pencil, and wood
Courtesy of Cara Megan Lewis

In Search of Miss Kim, 2026

Various materials within a vitrine
Courtesy of the artist

Jisoo Chung's *Dear Misses Kims* traces the gendered and Orientalizing transpacific history of the "Miss Kim" lilac, which American military horticulturist Elwyn M. Meader initially brought to the United States while stationed at a base in Korea in 1947. Using Korea's ubiquitous surname, Meader named the plant after "all the Miss Kims in Korea." Reclaiming this act of naming, Chung invited Korean women and nonbinary people in her community to rename the lilac based on their own impressions of the plant. Chung then altered enlarged prints of the original lilac specimen to reflect these new descriptions, pairing each with a hand-rendered transcription of its new name and story. The accompanying vitrine displays the artist's research materials, including Meader's writings, plant specimens, and camptown photographs, tracing entangled botanical, military, and gendered histories.

④ **JANE JIN KAISEN**

Burial of This Order, 2022

Single channel film. 4K. Color. Stereo sound

25 minutes 30 seconds

Courtesy of the artist

In this film, Jane Jin Kaisen gathers a diverse group of people, including anti-military activists, environmentalists, musicians, artists, poets, and diasporic, queer, and trans participants, who perform a symbolic burial. They process through an abandoned resort on Jeju Island, a region affected by Japanese colonial rule, Cold War division, mass tourism, and military development. This carnivalesque performance is not a traditional funeral ritual: the group carries a coffin draped in dark camouflage, while a black mirror replaces the customary portrait of the deceased. As Dokkaebi deities (mythical creatures with supernatural powers in Korean mythology) move through the capitalist ruins, this burial serves to dismantle a current world order built on imperial hierarchy and division, allowing other stories to begin to take form.

⑤ **STEPHANIE SYJUCO**

Inherent Vice Series, 2024

Archival pigment inkjet print and vinyl

Inclusive of Four Components:

1) *Hand Studies (FM speeches, tight shot)*, 2024

Archival pigment inkjet print

Edition of 8 plus 2 Artist's Proofs

2) *Anti-Riot Police Squad (Batons, Shields)*, 2024

Archival pigment inkjet print

Edition of 8 plus 2 Artist's Proofs

3) *Beauty Queens (Miss Asia)*, 2024

Archival pigment inkjet print

Edition of 8 plus 2 Artist's Proofs

4) *Hair (Eyes, Tears)*, 2024

2024 digital print on vinyl wall sticker (matte finish)

Edition of 8 plus 2 Artist's Proofs

Courtesy of the artist and Silverlens

Inherent Vice (Deep Cuts), 2024

Digital video, silent, 1 hour 6 minutes 15 seconds

Courtesy of the artist and Silverlens

These works from Stephanie Syjuco's series *Inherent Vice* recontextualize the photographic archives of *The Manila Chronicle* newspaper, which closed in 1972 after the Ferdinand E. Marcos government installed martial law in the Philippines. Syjuco's wall collage of photos and related video work pulls from a diverse array of press photos, juxtaposing everything from popular hairstyles to student protests and police brutality. This photojournalistic portrait of the Philippines in the post-war era, following the conclusion

of American colonial rule in 1946, shows a country attempting to define itself anew and on the brink of authoritarian rule. Syjuco's investigative practice draws attention to the physical archive and the fragmentation of history to reconsider how empires are constructed and remembered.

⑥ PELENAKEKE BROWN

Crossings: Taemā and Tilafaigā, 2023

Digital print on tapa cloth (Mulberry tree paper)

Courtesy of the artist

Printed on tapa cloth (mulberry tree paper), Pelenakeke Brown's work draws upon the Sāmoan story of disabled twin sisters Taemā and Tilafaigā, whose oceanic journey brought the art of *tatau*, a practice of body tattooing, from Fiji to Sāmoa. By reconfiguring symbols found on a computer keyboard, Brown designs patterns that recall traditional *tatau* design, communicating and creating from the comfort of her own bed. This work brings together the Sāmoan concept of *vā*, the sacred relational space between people, alongside "crip time," which challenges linear expectations of time and able-bodied productivity. In a Pacific profoundly impacted by colonial and military power, Brown foregrounds Indigenous, Disabled, and Oceanic ways of understanding time and relationality as alternatives to the borders and imperialist legacies of the region.

⑦ **SEAN CONNELLY**

O'AHU, A GIANT MILITARY BASE, 2019

Video, sound, 4 minutes 21 seconds

Courtesy of the artist

O'AHU, A GIANT MILITARY BASE visualizes US military occupation across the Hawaiian island. Sean Connelly contrasts Hawaiian singer Israel Kamakawiwo'ole's ukulele rendition of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," with renderings of fighter jets, missiles, tanks, satellites, and bullets that represent the military activity across Oahu, presented on a perspective map. The short video covers activity from 1898 when the US annexed the Republic of Hawaii to the present, and includes figures like John M. Schofield, who first surveyed the landscape and recommended building a naval base at Pearl Harbor. Connelly utilizes cartography to make occupation legible at island scale.

⑧ **LANI ASUNCIÓN**

Settlers of the Pacific, 2026

Table, Camo Netting, and 3D Printed Game Pieces

Courtesy of the artist and Ogden Contemporary Arts, Ogden, UT

Settlers of the Pacific is a custom-made tabletop modeled after the board game *Settlers of Catan*, featuring military bases, golf courses, and religious temples of American settler colonialism in Hawai'i. The newest addition in Asunción's series, *Duty-Free Paradise*

(2020–present), the work is installed on a miniature golf putting green that references the transformation of the islands, where the artist was raised, into an escape for leisure and American capital industry. Camouflage-dyed netting in shades of blue drapes overhead like ocean waves, evoking the profound military presence in Hawai'i through initiatives like the largest global maritime exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) and The Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility.

⑨ MAO ISHIKAWA

Red Flower, The Women of Okinawa, 1975-77

6 gelatin silver prints

Courtesy of the artist, Alison Bradley Projects, and POETIC SCAPE

This early work by Okinawan photographer Mao Ishikawa documented everyday life in Koza and Kin, Okinawa, where US military bases from World War II remained operational during the Cold War. Ishikawa photographed people she befriended while working at a bar on the base, including bar girls who resisted societal prejudices deriding them as panpan (prostitutes) and Black American GIs, who faced racism within the military and local community. Living amongst this marginalized social circle, Ishikawa recorded everyday life and close relationships that formed around US military bases in colonized Okinawa. Her intimate photographs also reflect complex histories of visibility and consent. After their original publication in *Hot Days in Camp Hansen!!* (1982), some subjects asked to withdraw their

photographs, which were omitted from later publications including *Red Flower*.

⑩ CRYSTAL Z CAMPBELL

Perlas, 2025

Handmade abaca paper with manila envelopes, manila rope, and mixed materials

Made in collaboration with Tatiana Ginsberg at Dieu Donné

Courtesy of the artist

Born to a Black American father formerly stationed in the Philippines and a Filipino/Chinese mother, both of whom later worked for the U.S. Postal Service, Crystal Z Campbell investigates the material traces of American military and postal infrastructures. Campbell's practice is framed by what they term the "underloved." These handmade paper works from the *Post Masters* series trace U.S. colonialism in the Philippines through dissected Manila envelopes, fibrous manila rope, and handmade abaca paper collaged into abstract, cartographic compositions. Once ubiquitous in American bureaucratic and postal life, the Manila envelope is named after the Philippine abaca, or Manila hemp, which had been central to American colonial land and export industries following the U.S. seizure of the Philippines in 1898 and the Philippine-American War.

⑪ **KYURI JEON**

The Flesh-Witness / 산증인 / 活證人, 2021

Video, sound, 13 minutes 34 seconds

Courtesy of the Artist

Island to Island, 2026

Tattoo stencils on wall, Site-specific installation

Courtesy of the Artist

In *The Flesh-Witness* / 산증인 / 活證人, Kyuri Jeon revisits US military archival footage documenting Korean War prisoners held at the Geoje-do POW Camp who were forcibly tattooed with anti-communist slogans as coerced evidence of political allegiance. In *Island to Island*, Jeon translates these tattoo stencils onto the gallery walls, acting as a unifying thread throughout the exhibition. Newly adapted for Los Angeles, the installation links Geoje Island to Southern California's own history as a major hub of U.S. military infrastructure and wartime mobilization in the Pacific.

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