

***yesterday's gesture***

curated by Yutong Shi



Exhibition date: July 27 - August 25, 2023  
Public opening reception: Thursday, July 27, 6-8 pm

(June 26, 2023 – Brookline, MA) Praise Shadows Art Gallery is pleased to announce the 2023 summer group exhibition ***yesterday's gesture***, guest curated by Yutong Shi and featuring artists **Alchemyverse**, **Gohar Dashti**, **Katherine Mitchell DiRico**, and **Sue Yang**. Focused on the ways in which these artists consider landscape, nature, and their intertwined relationship with humanity across space and time, the works reflect a collection of places, glimpses of memories, that emphasize the symbiosis between people and land. The artists have imagined what landscape means for our livelihood within a grander scale of time, particularly during this period of ecological deterioration and displacement. On view from July 27 through August 25, *yesterday's gesture* features site-specific installation, ceramics, photography, sound, and drawing.

The artist duo **Alchemyverse** (Bicheng Liang and Yixuan Shao) spent time in the American Southwest during a research trip over the course of the pandemic, driving across the Sierra Nevada and Colorado Plateau. The trip was a creative bounty. They returned to New York with a rich collection of materials: medium-format analog film, sound recordings, as well as soil crumbs and rock samples. *Node Vessels* (2021-23) is a series of ceramics made from clay castings of the crevices in between rocks affected by erosion. The castings were then wood-fired onsite just outside of Death Valley National Park. A related body of work also featured in the exhibition is the cyanotype installations, *Stir, Full of, Abounding in* (2021) and *Fleeting Anchors* series (2021). These wall-based works attempt to preserve, reconstruct, and reflect on the experience of viewing a landscape, and in turn, ponder our memory of memories. The large-scale triptych and sound installation *Stir, Full of, Abounding in* (2021) further explores the physicality of the image and the subjective experience of Earth's time via gestures of tearing, belaying, and displacing, embedded with the vibrating sound of recordings collected from the underground, wind, and underwater.

Over the past two decades of her career, artist **Gohar Dashti** has explored the faint but profound connection between the natural world and human migrations. According to Dashti, “the limitless reach of nature and landscapes – that reach across cultural and political divisions – as well as the ways in which immigrants inevitably search out and reconstruct familiar topographies in a foreign land, together tell a story familiar to all humans.” In two works from the *Land/s* series (2019), Dashti joins two disparate environments into a state of coexisting, one from her home country of Iran and another from her new home, the U.S., forefronting a paradox of identity and belonging that is growing in landscapes and rooted in nature. Her most recent work *Disappearing Nature* (2022) is a series of manipulated Polaroid photos taken during a residency at MacDowell in Peterborough, New Hampshire. The picturesque New England landscape becomes unrecognizable – almost extraterrestrial – through her delicate process of burning and peeling. To Dashti, the unforeseeable results of the process “mirrors the precarious situation of our Earth: resulting in imagery that is violent, urgent, and, amid its transitions, often unexpectedly beautiful.”

**Katherine Mitchell DiRico** will create a site-specific installation for the exhibition. Her multidisciplinary practice utilizes deep geographic time as a conceptual framework as an inquiry into the slippery nature of time and space through natural, synthetic, material, and virtual worlds. In her work, time is an ever-shifting phenomenon that evades permanence, and as a result, her works often move between and through mediums, categories, and disciplines to testify to the nature of how reality is constructed. Disrupting conventional patterns of perception, DiRico's work invites viewers to consider the ambiguity between natural and artificial conditions. When does something stop being one thing and become another? What is real and what is speculative?

Artist **Sue Yang**'s practice focuses on the connections between nature, technology, and personal well-being through the use of everyday materials. Her artistic practice is influenced by traditional Chinese art and is firmly grounded in the

landscape painting tradition. On view in the exhibition will be two works on paper from her *Tea and Coffee* series (2010-11). Using dry tea and coffee as her ink medium, the combination of ink wash created from tea, together with the collage-like application of coffee grounds and tea leaves to literally build up the landscape, reflect the duality of Yang's Chinese and American artistic influences.

#### **About the artists**

**Alchemyverse** was founded by artists Bicheng Liang and Yixuan Shao in New York. The duo began their collaboration at the MFA program at Columbia University. Bicheng Liang received his BFA from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, China. Yixuan Shao received her BA from University of California, San Diego. They combine their respective knowledge bases and skills in print-making and sound studies, with intensive field research to form their collaborative practice. Select exhibitions include Asia Art Archive in America, Brooklyn; The Bishop Museum, Honolulu; Lenfest Center for the Arts, Columbia University, New York, and among others. Residencies include LMCC Governors Island, New York; Desert 23°S, La Wayaka Current, Chile; AAA-A Zine Residency, Brooklyn; and the Rabbit Island Residency, Lake Superior, Michigan. Currently, they are in residence at the International Studio & Curatorial Program, Brooklyn.

**Gohar Dashti** is an Iranian-American artist and currently a visiting professor at Berlin Art University. With an MA in photography from Tehran University of Art, she focuses on large-scale photography, addressing social issues with a theatrical aesthetic. Her work intertwines history, contemporary culture, and anthropological perspectives. Her work can be found in the permanent collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, and among others. Select fellowships include the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, Umbertide (2024), V&A Parasol Foundation Prize for Women in Photography (2023), ISP Research Residency Grant at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Museum für Islamische Kunst (2023), MacDowell, Peterborough, NH (2017 & 2021), DAAD Award, Berlin (2009-2011), and others.

**Katherine Mitchell DiRico** creates multimedia installations that investigate how we negotiate connectivity and sense perception in today's networked world. She holds an MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Tufts University, and a BA from Smith College and the University of Dakar, Senegal. Her previous solo exhibition at Praise Shadows *i'll believe in anything for a while* took place in early 2022. She has been commissioned by Google and HUBweek, and select solo and group exhibitions include the Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland; Stockwell Studio, London; Transmediale Festival, Berlin; and the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston. DiRico is currently a 2023 recipient of the Stoneleaf Retreat in Eddyville, NY.

**Sue Yang** is a mixed media artist whose works are inspired by Buddhism, Chinese and American cultures, and daily life. Yang holds an MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Tufts University, an MA from Ohio State University, and a BA from National Taiwan University. Her solo exhibitions include Boston William Morris Hunt Memorial Library at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Kwang Hwa Information and Culture Center, Hong Kong; New England School of Arts and Design, Boston. Group exhibitions include Roger That Art Gallery at Roger Williams University; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Attleboro Art Museum, MA; Danforth Art Museum, MA; Bakalar Gallery at Mass College of Art; Worcester Art Museum; Galerie für Landschaftskunst, Germany; and National Museum of Manila, Philippines.

#### **About the curator**

Born and raised in Chongqing, China, **Yutong Shi** is a curator of global contemporary art and photography, and currently lives in Boston. Yutong holds an MA in History of Art and Architecture from Boston University and a BA in Art History from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her specialty within contemporary art lies in theories and representations of time, memory, and urban space, with particular interests in lens-based media, Asian/Asian American art, and exhibition history. She has served in curatorial roles at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, Praise Shadows Art Gallery, Boston University Art Galleries, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Krannert Art Museum.

#### **About Praise Shadows Art Gallery**

Praise Shadows Art Gallery is a contemporary art program based in the Boston area with a focus on exceptional artists working in all artistic disciplines. Our worldview is informed by the notion that the artworld's untapped and unrecognized potential is worth cultivating, supporting, and championing. Since our founding in December 2020, the gallery has placed artworks by our artists in esteemed public collections, and our exhibitions have been covered widely in major international media outlets. Our work is grounded by partnering closely with artists to develop opportunities in traditional and emerging models of creativity and entrepreneurship — exhibitions, commissions, brand partnerships, new technologies, and original concepts that no one has ever tried before. [www.praiseshadows.com](http://www.praiseshadows.com)

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