

## ***ENCOUNTER / EXCHANGE***

**A TWO-PERSON EXHIBITION BY TIFFANY CALVERT AND NAOMI REIS**

**ORGANIZED BY GUEST CURATORS AMETHYST REY BEAVER AND SARAH BURNEY**

On view April 22 - May 26, 2022



(March 21, 2022 -- Brookline, MA) Praise Shadows is pleased to present *Encounter / Exchange*, a two-person exhibition featuring the works of artists Tiffany Calvert and Naomi Reis. Showing together for the first time, and for their first times in Boston, both artists use technology to re-examine still life art forms from the Netherlands and Japan, respectively, sparking new collisions and intersections for unexpected Encounters and fruitful Exchange.

At first glance, Tiffany Calvert's works could be mistaken for the sumptuous paintings from the Netherlands where the still life genre flourished during the 17th and 18th centuries, also known as the Dutch Golden Age. This period simultaneously benefited from global trade while leaving behind a harsh colonial legacy. In these symbolically rich paintings, the lush, bright petals droop heavily against the dark background, which have been interpreted as representative of *memento mori*, or the impermanence of life.

Calvert departs from her art historical sources by employing a digital artificial intelligence. Using a database of over 1,000 still life paintings, she trains her software to produce a new Dutch still life-inspired image, which she takes as the base layer of her paintings. Calvert then further abstracts this AI-generated image by painting and masking specific sections with vinyl patterns based on a variety of sources including tulip virus DNA, Cubist collage forms, and her own visual vocabulary. As described by poet and art critic John Yau, "Calvert's paintings are palimpsests, archeological digs, engagements with art history, improvisational riffs, and fractured views."

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*Ikebana*, the art of floral arranging dating back to the 6th century, is the point of departure for Brooklyn-based artist Naomi Reis. The word *ikebana* literally means “to preserve living flowers,” or “to preserve the essence of nature in a vase.” Originally introduced to Japan by Chinese Buddhist missionaries, the first school of flower arranging in Japan, Ikenobo, was founded in the early 7th century and the practice continues to this day. Practitioners learn a system of rules and symbolism, evoking Buddhist and Shinto beliefs to create a microcosm of the harmonious natural world using flowers, stems, twigs, and stone.

For Reis, as with Calvert’s exploration of Dutch still life painting, the centuries-old practice of *ikebana* is up for a re-interpretation through a technological lens. In this case, the artist takes the digital photos sent by her mother of her *ikebana* displayed outside their home in Kyoto and uses them as the foundational canvas. Appearing on her phone in pixelated semi-abstraction, Reis takes the abstraction even further using photo editing software. That image is then hand cut from hand-colored *washi* paper and pieced back together, creating a collage-based still life that is evocative of its earlier digital version, and even further removed from the original work of *ikebana* itself. Like a familiar memory.

*Encounter / Exchange* is co-curated by Amethyst Rey Beaver and Sarah Burney. Beaver and Burney began collaborating in 2007 as co-presidents of the Davis Museum Student Advisory Council (DMSAC) at Wellesley College. Through DMSAC, Beaver and Burney brought the Guerrilla Girls to Wellesley College’s campus for an artist talk and facilitated campus-wide events for students throughout the 2007-2008 school year.

### **About the Artists**

**Tiffany Calvert** has exhibited her work in the US and abroad, including Lawrimore Project in Seattle, E.TAY Gallery in New York, the Speed Museum in Louisville, Susquehanna Art Museum in Pennsylvania, and Cadogan Contemporary in London. Residencies include the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, I-Park, and ArtOmi International Arts Center, where she received a Geraldine R. Dodge Fellowship. Calvert has received grants from the Great Meadows Foundation and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Her work was recently profiled by critic John Yau in the online journal Hyperallergic. Her curatorial projects include “Some Abstraction Occurs” at 65GRAND Gallery in Chicago and “Magic” at Mercer College (featuring work by Chris Martin, Karla Knight, and Sarah Peters), which identified a trend in artists whose works address the otherworldly or magical. Calvert’s current paintings investigate the relationship between digital media, and the reception and perception of images and utilize diverse technologies such as fresco, 3D modeling, and data manipulation through code. She is Associate Professor of Art and Graduate Director at the Hite Art Institute at University of Louisville, and a Tiger Strikes Asteroid curatorial collective member.

**Naomi Kawanishi Reis** has exhibited at @KCUA Gallery (Kyoto), Youkobo Art Space (Tokyo), Transmitter (Brooklyn, NY), Mixed Greens (New York, NY), the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Wave Hill (Bronx, NY), among others. In 2018 she received a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant, and in 2015 was a NYFA Finalist in Painting. Residencies that have supported her work include Yaddo, the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, and the Lower East Side Printshop. A founding member of artist-run gallery Tiger Strikes Asteroid NY (2012-2017), in 2015-2019, she co-organized the collective AN/OTHER NY: a nomadic workspace for Asian art practitioners to gather through reading groups, workshops, and public events. She is currently a founding member of the Inner Fields NY sangha and reading group. She received an MFA from the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania and

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a BA in Transcultural Identity at Hamilton College. She was born in Shiga, Japan, and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

**About the Curators**

**Amethyst Rey Beaver** is an independent curator based in Louisville, Kentucky. Before working independently, she was the assistant curator at 21c Museum Hotels from 2016-2021, and worked on the modern and contemporary curatorial team at the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin from 2012-2016. She has her MA in Latin American Art History from UT Austin, her BA from Wellesley College, and is currently pursuing her MS in Human Factors in Information Design at Bentley University.

**Sarah Burney** is a writer and curator based in New York City. Previously she was the studio manager for Zarina and the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop. She has managed projects for South Asian Women's Creative Collective (SAWCC), the Guerrilla Girls, Gallery Espace (India), The Multiple Store (UK), and Letternoon.com (NY). She is a regular contributor to Kajal Magazine and has been published in Art Asia Pacific, Sotheby's, Scroll Projects, and Alexis Bittar's Journal, among others. She partnered with Zarina to co-author one of the artist's last major publications, *Directions to My House*, published by Asian/Pacific/American Institute, New York University.

**About Praise Shadows LLC**

We believe that the art ecosystem is filled with untapped potential, and our work is rooted in partnering closely with artists to develop opportunities in emerging models of creativity and entrepreneurship — exhibitions, commissions, brand partnerships, new technologies, original concepts that no one has ever tried before. Praise Shadows Art Gallery is a commercial gallery space in the Boston area showing the work of emerging and mid-career artists. It opened in December 2020. Praise Shadows Art Partners advises artists and companies in the creative industries on strategic partnerships and marketing. Our work is local, global, and virtual. [www.praiseshadows.com](http://www.praiseshadows.com)

**313A Harvard Street, Brookline, MA 02446**

**Wednesday - Sunday 11am - 6pm**

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Images Courtesy of the artists: (Left) Tiffany Calvert, #366, 2020, Oil on water based latex print on canvas, 55 x 66 inches. (Right) Naomi Kawanishi Reis, 111119 (90°W), 2021, Acrylic on washi paper and mylar cutouts, 36 ¾ x 47 ⅞ inches.

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