



For a Diverse, Inclusive, Accessible, and Equitable Field of Contemporary Art
Young Sun Han, Cody Herrmann, Jamerry Kim, Rejin Leys, and Priscilla Stadler

KAF KOREA ART FORUM

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 This publication documents the project, *Shared Dialogue, Shared Space*, in which the Korea Art Forum invited five New York-based artists to interact with park visitors at Margaret I. Carman Green - Weeping Beech Park in Flushing, New York, on May 31, 2020. The project was moved online because of COVID-19. The publication is in copyright. No reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of the copyright owners.

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 © Korea Art Forum with Heng-Gil Han, Naomi Kuo, and the featured five artists.

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Credits
 The program, including this publication, is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. The artist discussion is co-sponsored by the Queens Historical Society.



Director's Introduction
 Heng-Gil Han

Korea Art Forum (KAF) puts forward the hypothesis that contemporary art is a formless network that connects an uncountable number of unique elements. KAF argues that the term "contemporary" art is not a constative form-based concept used to identify a work of contemporary art by a certain style or certain mediums. KAF also argues that contemporary art is not all arts that are made at the present time. Contemporary art is neither the formal unity shared by objects in the same class, nor the unlimited plurality of a random collection, but the force of nexus manifesting itself as the unique interconnectedness that continues by discontinuity.

KAF proposes to take contemporary art as a system of reception that registers what is happening now in terms of global and local contexts. If contemporary art shall be equally free and open to all forms and images produced around the globe, it will have to be seen as a borderless field that deconstructs and transcends any boundaries, such as nationality, culture, or ideology. What makes contemporary art contemporary is its true relationship with the reality it refers to, insofar as art is considered a form of life. Contemporary art is an art that brings contemporary issues to appearance.

Shared Dialogue, Shared Space is an endeavor to resist repressive forces that stylize, commodify, and westernize contemporary art in the name of history or zeitgeist, which have brought many unwanted effects. The project brings people together to discuss contemporary issues addressed by artworks. The project examines what is real through the lens of artworks. The reality may be given but its recognition is a product the members of a society collectively construct together. Here lies the power of art for social transformation.

By presenting work of contemporary art at a public park, the project initiates public dialogue to identify the reality that impacts our lives and our shared space. The perception of reality is the reality that informs our decisions. It is not the given unprocessed reality but the perceived reality that directs our ac-

tions. The project furthers KAF's mission of bridging the world through art as it supports the creative endeavors of artists that bring together citizens of different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, academic and professional backgrounds to interact with one another and share their visions, values, and challenges in creating a vital community and thriving in a changing world.

Without implying that art activities are absent in the neighborhood, the project brings art to the community of Flushing. The project is artistically valuable to local residents as it aims to remove obstacles that impede immigrants from accessing, sharing, and reusing the innovative knowledge that has been produced by the arts. Taking advantage of the park's benefits of ADA compliance, easy access by MTA, and the community hub, the project invites diverse park visitors to build upon the artist's findings and participate in discourses on contemporary issues that affect our everyday lives. In this respect, the project promotes universal human rights and equal access to knowledge and information.

Due to COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown measure in New York State in March 2020, the project was modified into solitary actions of the participating artists to be shared with the public via live streaming. The focus of the project has shifted from an outdoor event that draws in passersby and park visitors, to a trilingual online and offline publication that may be easily distributed to a broader audience. Consequently, we came up with this broadsheet publication instead of one that is designed in a book-format.

I would like to thank the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts for providing necessary grants for the implementation of the project. I also thank the Queens Historical Society for co-hosting the Artist Discussion and the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation for allowing us to use their facility. Many kudos go to the artists and our staff, without whose dedicated commitment the project would not have come true. ■

Curator's Statement

Naomi Kuo

New York City is one of the major arts and culture capitals of the world and one of the most diverse cities in the world. But sometimes this combination creates a disconnect between art and who has access to it. In immigrant communities, especially for the middle and working-class with language barriers, there is often a double disconnect from the arts: alienation from the general culture of their adopted homes in addition to the separation from institutionalized art that is shared by many. In a place like Flushing, Queens, where Asian immigration in the last few decades has dramatically changed the makeup of the neighborhood, there is limited access not only to art, but also limited involvement in local issues and much of the cultural activity that the city has to offer.

More broadly, what is often lost in the cultural division is a widely shared ownership of space. Civic engagement suffers and identifying with the place as well as one's neighbors become difficult. In *Shared Dialogue, Shared Space*, select artists invite people to participate in creative interventions or to complete works of art in the form of poetry and sculptures, collections of objects, or conversations themselves, that

deal with this broad sense of civic engagement. Translations accompany most elements of the project to aid in accessibility, from promotion to events to documentation.

To briefly introduce the artists and their work: Rejin Leys and Priscilla Stadler represent artists from the borough of Queens who are active and respected in their neighborhoods (Jamaica and Long Island City), and whose works bring people together while raising critical issues, like responsible use of earth's resources, and the interconnectedness of human and natural worlds. They are Flushing's neighbors and bring a cross-pollination of ideas for a stronger borough. Cody Herrmann and Jamerry Kim are two artists who are longtime Flushing residents. Their work brings to the fore that which often stays in the background of our everyday lives—ecological health in the urban setting, and acts of history commemorated in roadside plaques or old houses. Such realities are present and yet a world away from the rush of today and the experiences of the recently uprooted. And finally, Young Sun Han—who divides his time between Brooklyn, NY, and New Brunswick, NJ—comes from the farthest distance geographically, but his work is also close to the Flushing Asian immigrant community. Sharing in the diaspora experience, he brings a focus to collective memories of immigration as well

as connections to ongoing conflicts in East Asia.

Holding this event in a public space (Margaret I. Carman Green - Weeping Beech Park) is another way to bring art to people with one less physical barrier to surmount, opening up interaction to park visitors and to those who pass by the area on the way to the store-lined streets nearby, whether to the majority Chinese commercial area on one side or the mostly Korean businesses on the other. The park itself and its adjacent landmarked houses are part of a network of historical sites preserving the memory of key individuals in Flushing's history who advocated for human rights and shaped the physical and economic landscape of the area. These and other histories are the inheritance of Flushing's current diverse residents.

There is much to learn even in the attempt to surmount the barriers to dialogue and to each other's creativity and concerns. Providing translations for this project helps expose the community to current topics in art, and it helps artists receive invaluable feedback on their work. Through this project and beyond, we hope to encourage more cultural exchange and opportunities for mutual impact. This creates art that is truly contemporary. ■

Artists, Their Work, and Public Interaction

Young Sun Han

Artist Statement

My work articulates human stories through intersecting media: photography, moving image, durational performance, rituals, installation, and found objects. I approach art-making as a series of research projects that aim to reveal how individuals and communities negotiate and adapt to cultural forces in order to locate their sense of place within society and history. Projects arise out of happenstance experiences through collecting, cataloging, and transposing imagery and materials, which take the final form as prints, installations, and publications. My interdisciplinary practice is borne out of collaboration with others, radical listening, and experimenting with different modes of photography, historical research, and gestures of exchange. My most recent exhibition, *The Unforever Parallel*, presents a variety of primary and secondary sources in order to reconcile the gulf between Korean war stories, personal memory, and tourism. ■

Cody Herrmann

Artist Statement

As climate change and environmental degradation impact communities at increasing rates across the globe, the institutionalized walls blocking ecological subjects and environmental justice from being understood by the general population must be broken down to ensure human adaptation and a resilient future. Combining socially engaged art and participatory design practices, my work references municipal policy, local history, and planning documents, highlighting site-specific relationships between land use and environmental stewardship, while breaking down traditional notions of artistic authorship and institutional expertise.

Drawing from my background in ecology and urban design, my works are informed by a combination of site visits, ethnographic research, and self-reflection. Manifesting primarily as qualitative research, onsite interventions, and public tours, my projects can be compiled into an iterative series. ■

Biography

Cody Herrmann (based in Flushing, NY) is an

Biography

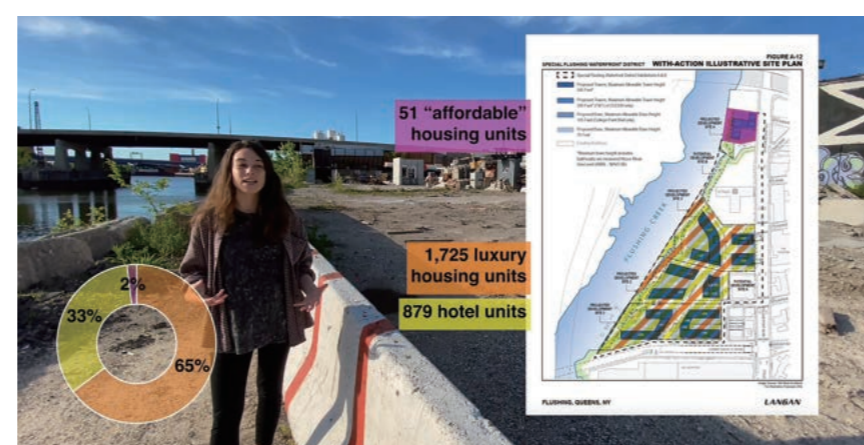
Young Sun Han (based in Brooklyn, NY, and New Brunswick, NJ) is a visual artist, curator and educator. He holds a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from Rutgers University, where he currently teaches and received the Broverro Photography Prize. He has exhibited at The Print Center, Philadelphia; Elijah Wheat Showroom, Brooklyn; Zimmerli Art Museum, New Brunswick; David Zwirner, Knockdown Center, LMAK books+design, and Printed Matter Inc. all NY; as well as Independent Brussels, Belgium; 4A Centre of Contemporary Art and University of Sydney in Australia; Sanderson Contemporary Art and Suter Contemporary Art Biennial in New Zealand. Han recently completed residencies at the Saas-Fee Summer Institute of Art, Berlin and Materia Abierta, Mexico City. ■



Han presents a cabinet full of items that symbolize stories of migration.

artist and community organizer interested in public space and urban resilience.

Since 2014, Cody has focused her creative work on a series of projects critiquing policy related to the development and environmental planning in parts of her hometown surrounding Flushing Bay and Creek. This ongoing series of socially engaged work has led her to collaborate on all-ages public programs with numerous institutions and advocacy groups working in Queens. Cody is currently a More Art Engaging Artists Fellow and Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning ARTWorks Resident Fellow. Cody holds an MFA from Social Practice Queens at CUNY Queens College. ■



Herrmann explains the relationship between "supposed community benefits" and luxury developments.



Cooking and Communing: a Lenape recipe by Touching Leaves Woman [Governors Island, NYC], 2019. A meal shared with discussion around the commemorative plaque about the Lenape's "sale" of Governors Island to Dutch colonists.

Project Description

To Translate is to Cross a Bridge: The Flushing Remonstrance (A Protest). For *Shared Dialogue, Shared Space*, a census inspired questionnaire will be translated to reflect the residents of the Flushing community. The questionnaire is based on the historical document, *The Flushing Remonstrance* and the questions will be on the themes of migration, belonging, and identity. ■



The Pulpmobile [Jamaica, Queens], 2018.

Project Description

Handmade paper is often enhanced with decorative materials. For *Shared Dialogue, Shared Space* we add shredded copies of "The New Colossus", the Emma Lazarus poem from the base of the Statue of Liberty. Translated into several languages, the poem highlights how for many New Yorkers, despite speaking different languages, our immigrant background is something that we have in common. ■



Leys demonstrates her papermaking process.



The PoeTREE [Jamaica, Queens], 2018. Community participation, mixed media; Dimensions variable.

Project Description

The PoeTREE is a collective interactive sculpture about significant trees in our lives—whether present or past, near or far. The public co-creates *The PoeTREE* by contributing their writing, drawing, or audio about trees. Stadler combines these with her own research on trees, creating a new *PoeTREE* sculpture. ■

Right: Stadler shows *PoeTREE* images from participants as she reads their texts aloud.

Far right: Stadler builds a sculpture with direction from the audience to select branches inscribed with phrases from *PoeTREE* submissions.

Jamerry Kim

Artist Statement

Jamerry Kim's approach to social practice art consists of activating a place, its people, and its language to create art as a community. Using various forms—video to graphic design—her projects are from a conceptual perspective. Taking inspiration from the Dadaists, the Situationists, and the Conceptual Minimalists, she explores the boundaries between the artist and the viewer, materiality and form, concept and language—and applies these to the street-scapes of Flushing. Walking along diaspora's streets, the definition of plurality is reflected in the everyday visage of its people, signage, language, and food. However, this plurality does not automatically mean integration. Her work aims to create a time and place for mindful contemplation and negotiation of our relationship to selfhood, community, and language. ■

Biography

Jamerry Kim (Based in Queens, NY) was born in Germany, grew up in South Korea and immigrated to America. She considers her most formative years to be spent in Flushing, Queens. She is a multi-disciplinary artist and an educator interested in themes of diaspora, language justice, and history. She has worked on various

projects which include designing a book that functions as an object and is part of the permanent collection at the Smithsonian Library. Her documentary film about a Queens Korean adoptee and transgender activist, Pauline Park, was screened at film festivals including Frameline San Francisco Film Festival at the historic Castro Theatre, Athena Film Festival at Barnard College, and the Korean American Film Festival in NYC. Currently, Kim is working on a project that connects Flushing's rich history to its present-day community. She attended the Cooper Union H.S. Art Program and studied art at Yale University. ■



Kim discusses Flushing's history of religious freedom as it relates to the area's current diversity. She observes that historical sites markers lack appropriate translations.

Rejin Leys

Artist Statement

Paper is both a neutral ground to which we add meaning, and an object with its own history and culture. Socially, we connect with each other by using it to communicate, even across great distances of time and space. My *PulpMobile* uses this familiar, ubiquitous material to create a temporary, public site for dialogue and exploration. By creating a fully stocked papermaking studio on a rolling cart, I can offer community members a skill they may not have had access to before, as a strategy to activate public spaces through collaboration, creativity, and fellowship. ■



The video zooms in on the "New Colossus" paper floating in the pulp; water ripple sounds play in the background.



Priscilla Stadler

Artist Statement

I am a self-proclaimed fake architect who makes buildings from cheesecloth, protests profit-driven real estate, designs interactions as starting points for reflection and community activism, collaborates for creative movement-building, plays with oracles and divination, makes solar prints, and draws not-quite-imaginary trees.

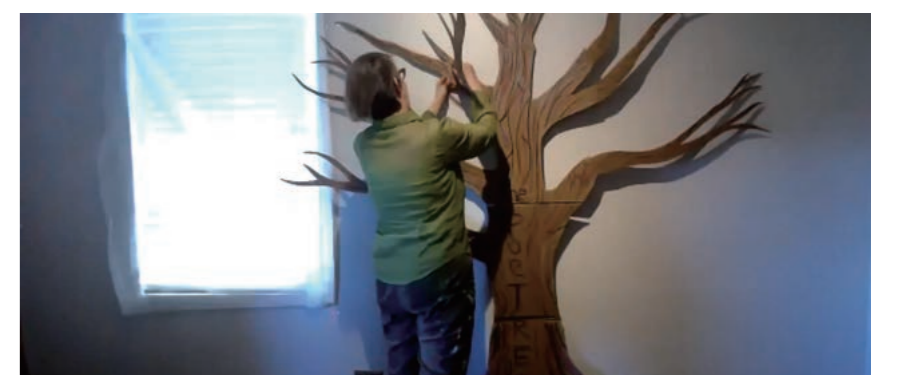
Through constructing my invented architectural practice in NYC's contested landscapes, I've learned that things that sometimes appear delicate—like cloth and communities—can be much tougher and resilient than they seem. ■



Biography

Priscilla Stadler's cross-disciplinary work has appeared in the Queens Museum, the New Museum, Flux Factory, Art in Odd Places, and other venues throughout NYC. Her projects have been funded by More Art, the Citizens Committee of NY, Queens Art Intervention, and the Queens Council on the Arts. In 2014, Stadler was a Create Change Fellow with The Laundromat Project. She was awarded artist residencies at the Contemporary Artists Center (Troy, NY), ACRE (Chicago), and Vermont Studio Center.

The PoeTREE has taken several collaborative forms since 2014—with The Laundromat Project in Hunt's Point, Bronx, the Queens Creative Solidarity's Studio in the Park Residency at the Queens Museum, and the Southeast Queens Artists' Alliance (SEQAA) cART festival in Jamaica, Queens. ■



Project Description

High Rent, Low Tide sends participants on a self-guided tour through downtown Flushing. The 25-minute, mile-long route highlights local history, ecology, and recent real-estate development in Flushing, ending on the eastern shoreline of Flushing Creek. ■



Herrmann's tour covers a "retail and lifestyle corridor" that spans from downtown Flushing to the waterfront.



Additional still from Han's presentations.

Artist Discussion

The event ended with a discussion among the artists. Below are selected excerpts.

Question: How did the pandemic change your project?

Han: It was difficult conceiving of a site specific project without being able to access the site and community in a live way.... I had to rely more on virtual correspondence, carrying other people's stories forward through emails and drawing from other conversations online.

Herrmann: Working around Flushing Creek—because everyone is pooping out covid bacteria, it really makes the waterway an unsafe place to be. My original project was actually having people kayak in the creek, which is totally off the table now.

Stadler: At first it was very hard for me to conceive of doing this in a non-in person environment but then it became a very interesting challenge. And it goes to the larger consideration of what it means to share dialogue and share space in this landscape and I think that's a really interesting creative and political challenge right now.

Kim: I felt a sense of urgency and a feeling of wanting to connect. Even though it was online and it wasn't site specific, that feeling was still there.

Question: What was it like to work through language accessibility for your project?

Leys: I originally thought of collecting material from the neighborhood like flyers and ads and menus in the different languages to shred and put in the paper. But I decided to focus on symbolic and meaningful text instead and to add it in a symbolic way.

Stadler: I really appreciate having this be a trilingual project.... It forced me to be more economical with my language and my content and that's a good thing overall.

Han: In our virtual version of this, there's such a rhythm and pause between each statement, which requires so much listening and exchange. And yet it just highlights the challenges of communication and being uncomfortable to understand. But I think that is a good learning process as well.

Question: What do you think about the role of art and artists in times of crisis?

Leys: Providing different perspectives on crisis is important and is a role that artists can play.

Herrmann: Art is a good tool for communicating complex issues and topics.... I think it's really important that people keep making work and trying to get their ideas and their perspectives out there. And also people who are more visual arts inclined, protest art and things like that are really important.

Stadler: It can be a role to provoke. But I also see the value of providing space for reflection and thoughtfulness and learning, and being able to inspire other people to be their most creative selves. I think that is one of the best things artists can do in crisis, or any other time for that matter.

Han: Artists have to bear witness and illuminate underserved communities and stories. And we have to participate in other civic ways just like everyone else who is not an artist.

Kim: Art carries us. And when we're in crisis and we don't know what's to come, I think art's purpose is to embrace us and care for us, and it has that ability to carry us over. ■



Additional still from Kim's presentations.

Audience Feedback

Select comments from the live stream audience on Facebook:

For *The Pulp Mobile*

Julio Castillo · 30:47 Very soothing process 3

Sharer
이현정 · 49:36 Thank you 🙏

Gary Richmond · 1:10:46 I have enjoyed the Poe Tree project enormously over the past weeks, and this is a brilliant and beautiful culmination. 4

For *The PoeTree*

Rose Anderson-Gips · 1:18:18 so moving 4

Ximena Gallardo C · 1:19:18 Excellent! 1

For *To Translate is to Cross a Bridge*

Reese Francis · 2:11:13 Yes I would love to learn more! Thank you for the history! 1

Reese Francis · 2:15:23 Wow it really speaks to whose spaces are valued and whose are not 2

For *High Rent, Low Tide*

Alanna Taubman · 3:10:37 very informative tour, thanks

Sharer
Shweta Parmar · 4:16:10 Thank you to all artists and organizers for your efforts. May other Flushing community members continue to learn more about them. I've shared in two groups. Looking fwd to hear how your work all unfolds. 3

Exhibition Checklist

Young Sun Han

Mementos of Migration, 2020. Found objects and texts, performance; Dimensions variable. Presented via live stream on Facebook.com/kafny.org, May 31, 2020.

Cody Herrmann

High Rent, Low Tide, 2020. Artist-guided tour video and map of a 25-minute mile-long route around the eastern Flushing Creek shoreline. Presented via live stream on Facebook.com/kafny.org, May 31, 2020

Jamerry Kim

To Translate is to Cross a Bridge: The Flushing Remonstrance (A Protest), 2020. Digital survey, excerpts of the Flushing Remonstrance; Dimensions variable. Presented via live stream on Facebook.com/kafny.org, May 31, 2020.

Rejin Leys

The Pulpmobile, 2015 to present. Papermaking cart and recycled paper, public participation; Dimensions variable. Presented via live stream on Facebook.com/kafny.org, May 31, 2020.

Priscilla Stadler

The PoeTREE, 2020. Mixed media and public participation; Dimensions variable. Presented via live stream on Facebook.com/kafny.org, May 31, 2020.

What We Have Learned

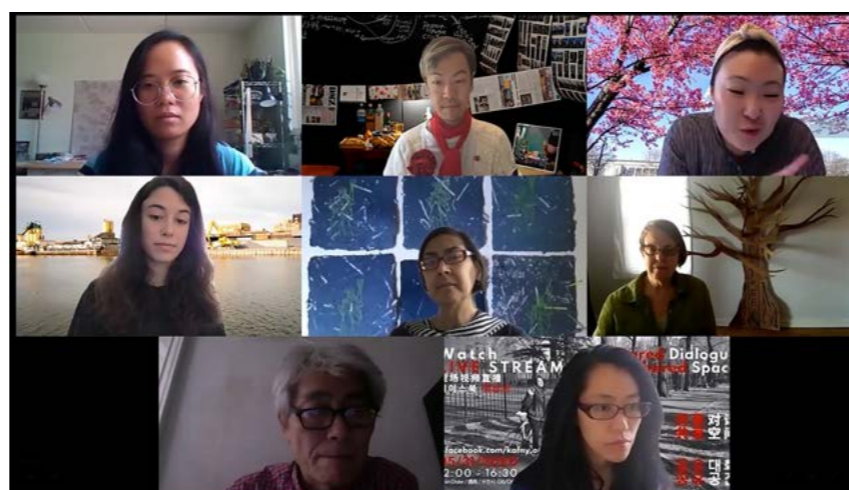
Providing language access takes work and patience for everyone involved. We experienced that in all stages of *Shared Dialogue*, *Shared Space*. Extra coordination was needed for materials to be translated in time and plans shifted multiple times because of COVID-19. We learned that translation itself is an art. It is not enough to simply make words understandable--it is also important to know where and how to reach people. Admittedly, we were limited in our ability to build new audiences without being able to position ourselves in public spaces.

Recent events have truly pressed the question of what sharing dialogue and space means. The pandemic showed how not just our language but also our virtual spaces are different. Separate news sources and social media platforms mean we are often having separate conversations and unaware of each other's action or inaction. As for physical spaces, the #BlackLivesMatter protests are a reminder that our streets are carriers of public messages. But how does one come to understand the issues, know when to gather, and trust others to offer one's presence in solidarity? Interconnection leads to knowledge which leads to care.

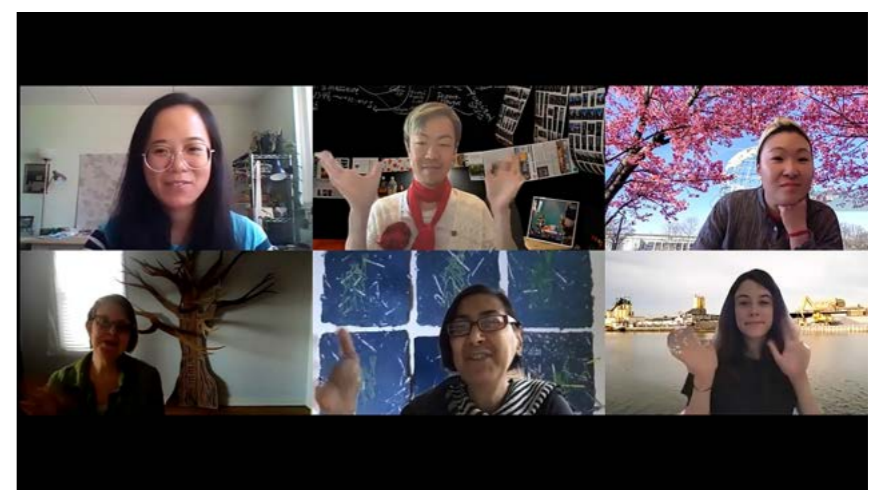
As for the artists' projects, they provided different lessons according to their relationship to specific spaces and their use of words. We started with Rejin's reflections on immigration through symbolic actions and abstraction, followed by Priscilla's focus on individual connections to the natural world. Their projects moved between text and action, with a backdrop of moving visuals helping to create a fourth language of materiality and beauty that needed no translation. Young's work flowed in that vein as well, bringing together objects and stories with minimal words through performance. However, through dialogue we connected more with the specific stories of migration.

Jamerry's work presented Flushing as a site of contested identities and histories. And Cody's project guided viewers via video through both industrial lots and opaque bureaucratic processes. These two projects had the challenge of relaying important facts and complex ideas, requiring lengthy translations. However, this also underscores how sometimes the details that communities need to pay attention to are not easily communicated.

In the end, we are all thankful to have had the opportunity to put forward this work, even through multiple crises. It has been a valuable experience to work with diverse artists and communities, make new connections as we were able, and develop new practices, with more lessons ahead of us. As disaster and conflict expose inequalities in our society, we hope that art can help give people the tools and the strength needed to address the issues that affect all of us. ■



All the artists and interpreters gather on screen for the artist discussion.



The artists wave goodbye at the end of the live stream.