

Feminism Is
Not Your Enemy

Feminism Is Not Your Enemy
AAPI Women Artist Cohort

Published by **AHL Foundation**
2605 Frederick Douglass Blvd., #C1, New York, NY 10030
www.ahlfoundation.org
info@ahlfoundation.org

President and Founder of AHL Foundation:
Sook Nyu Lee Kim

Director & Exhibition Producer :
Jiyoung Lee

Curator:
Joyce Chung

2025 AHL-AAPI Women Artist Cohort:
Soeun Bae
Lena Chen
hamsa fae
Ibuki Kuramochi

Project Manager & Catalog Design:
Wha Yong Shin

Exhibition Poster Design:
Gayoung Do

Photography:
Misun Jin

This catalog accompanies the exhibition **Feminism Is Not Your Enemy**, on view at the AHL Foundation Gallery from March 15 to March 29, 2025. It features a curatorial essay, exhibition photography, and documentation of the opening performance program held on March 15.

Feminism Is Not Your Enemy is part of the **AHL-AAPI Women Artist Cohort**, a new initiative launched in 2025 to amplify the voices of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women artists. Through this program, participating artists engage with urgent social issues and challenge dominant narratives through their creative practices.

Feminism Is Not
Your Enemy

AAPI Women Artist Cohort

Soeun Bae
Lena Chen
Kamsa Fae
Ibuki Kenamochi

Contents

6	<i>Foreword</i> by President
8	<i>Curatorial Statement</i>
14	<i>Exhibition View</i> “Feminism is Not Your Enemy”
32	<i>Opening Performances</i>
34	<i>My Private Sleepover Service</i> by Soeun Bae
44	HUMAN PERFORMER by Ibuki Kuramochi
54	<i>Five Flavours</i> by Lena Chen
64	GIRL VOICE by hamsa fae
74	<i>Photography Credit</i>
75	<i>Exhibition Checklist</i>

Foreword

AHL Foundation, Inc. is proud to present *Feminism Is Not Your Enemy*, featuring the AAPI Women Artist Cohort: Soeun Bae, Lena Chen, hamsa fae, and Ibuki Kuramochi. This exhibition brings together Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women artists who explore the complexities of desire, agency, and power dynamics through their artistic practices.

This initiative was made possible by the generous support of the AAPI Community Development Fund (AAPI CDF). The AHL-AAPI Women Artist Cohort was established to provide a platform for AAPI women artists to examine and respond to critical issues through their work. Over the past four months, the selected artists have participated in a series of workshops

led by guest curator Joyce Chung (Curator at Asia Art Initiatives, Philadelphia) and Jiyoung Lee (Director of Programs at AHL Foundation), refining their concepts and preparing for this exhibition. *Feminism Is Not Your Enemy* is the culmination of those thoughtful conversations and creative efforts. Centering the diverse voices within AAPI communities, the exhibition celebrates the strength of women to build agency, challenge societal norms, and inspire positive change.

This catalog includes documentation from the performance and opening reception held on March 15, 2025, at the AHL Foundation Gallery, as well as installation views from the exhibition, which continued through March 29. It also

features the artists' statement and an insightful curatorial essay. I applaud the 2025 AHL-AAPI Women Artist Cohort—Soeun Bae, Lena Chen, hamsa fae, and Ibuki Kuramochi—for completing the program with such dedication and creativity. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to curator Joyce Chung for her thoughtful vision, and to Jiyoung Lee for proposing and successfully managing this project from start to finish. Special thanks as well to Wha Yong Shin, who joined the AHL Foundation this month and beautifully designed this catalog.

As someone who immigrated to the United States in 1969 and founded the AHL Foundation in 2003, it is deeply meaningful for me to see this exhibition shine a light on the work of Asian

women artists. I am especially proud that all our board members are Asian immigrant women. We remain committed to uplifting the voices of those who are often overlooked and to providing a platform for experimental, socially engaged art.

Sook Nyu Lee Kim

Founder and President

AHL Foundation

Curatorial Statement

Feminism Is Not Your Enemy is an urgent and timely exhibition that seeks to reclaim and reframe the narrative around feminism that is too often misunderstood, misrepresented, and weaponized. At its core, the exhibition challenges the reductive misconceptions that have created ideological rifts in our society, reasserting feminism not as a divisive force, but as a movement committed to equity, justice, and collective liberation.

Feminism is not monolithic. It encompasses a wide spectrum of thought that is liberal, socialist, and radical, each with its own distinct strategies and visions. This exhibition centers on intersectionality, a concept introduced by scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, which acknowledges the overlapping and interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, gender, and class. By focusing on the lived experiences of racialized women, particularly voices from AAPI communities, Feminism Is Not Your Enemy highlights the nuanced, multifaceted nature of oppression and resistance.

Through this lens, the exhibition becomes a celebration of resilience, agency, and transformative power. It honors women who defy restrictive roles, navigate layered identities, and use their voices and bodies to challenge systemic barriers. Their art is not only expressive; it is a

form of activism, a call to reimagine society and assert that another way of being is possible.

Styled as a “women artists’ performance art festival,” the exhibition opens with four dynamic performances unfolding throughout the day, each one a sensorially disquieting and provocative encounter that embodies feminist resistance and radical care. From movement to sound, from silence to spectacle, these works speak to both personal histories and collective futures.

The opening performance of Feminism Is Not Your Enemy features a hauntingly evocative live vocal sound installation by hamsa fae, whose work offers an embodied meditation on the transfeminine experience. Drawing on ancestral sonic traditions of shamans and ritualists from the Asian Pacific, hamsa channels these spiritual vibrations through a contemporary, hyper-sensual lens, interrogating the social contracts inscribed onto the femme body and, more specifically, the femme voice.

The performance unfolds as both ritual and reckoning. Using her voice as the primary medium, hamsa traverses a wide spectrum of sounds from ethereal hums to guttural howls, each carefully modulated to disrupt normative expectations of gendered vocality.

Her soundscape hovers between the sacred and the subversive, asking: What is a “girl voice”? Who gets to define it? Audience participation becomes a vital part of the experience. Viewers are invited to record themselves responding to the prompt: “How’s this for a girl’s voice?” hamsa then collects and layers these disparate recordings into a growing choral composition. The result is a chaotic yet strangely harmonic symphony—a wild, multi-voiced harmony that celebrates vocal multiplicity and defies binary constraints. This collaborative aspect of the work serves as a reclamation of voice in both the literal and metaphorical sense, with each layer adding texture to a collective cry for recognition, liberation, and presence.

Her bodily movements are as much a part of the piece as her voice. As she howls, growls, and sniffs, the space transforms. It feels as though the gallery became a living forest, one where instinct, intuition, and identity merge with nature’s raw energy. Her intent is to reconnect the human voice to land, to the grounding forces of nature, and to the cyclical processes of death, renewal, and regeneration.

Visually, the performance is equally arresting. Draped in a translucent veil of pale grey fabric, her body becomes a shifting silhouette, fragile and ethereal. As she wraps herself in mic wire,

binding and unbinding, it evokes a surreal, almost mythic image: a figure caught between entanglement and emancipation. The wire, both a conduit of voice and a symbol of restraint, underscores the performance’s tension between visibility and silencing, connection and captivity.

hamsa fae’s piece is not just a performance. It is an invocation. It demands that we listen with more than our ears, to consider how voice and body are policed, fetishized, liberated, and reimagined. It leaves the audience suspended in a liminal space between the known and the wild, the human and the elemental.

The second performance of *Feminism Is Not Your Enemy*, conceived by multidisciplinary artist Soeun Bae, unfolds as an intimate yet uncanny encounter. The performance is a dreamlike sleepover experience that quietly unsettles and redefines the familiar dynamics of closeness. Set atop a subtly pulsating pumping air bed, the performance centers on the interactions between two female bodies in a shared space, revealing how intimacy is formed, strained, and restructured through both physical and emotional negotiations.

In this quietly potent tableau, the air bed becomes more than a resting place; it is a responsive, breathing surface that distorts

with every movement, amplifying the subtle tensions between weight and lightness, support and surrender. The soundscape, consisting of a textured composition of experimental audio, shifts between ambient vibrations and mechanical murmurs, mirroring the push-pull of the bodies and their precarious movements between autonomy and attachment.

Beside the bed stands a table bearing a sculptural apparatus: an enigmatic, medical-industrial assemblage of clear hoses and tubing, connected directly to the performers' bodies. These extensions—tethering the internal to the external, the organic to the artificial—functions as metaphoric veins, simultaneously evoking life support, emotional dependency, and the often-invisible systems that sustain bodies in relationship. The tubes create a kind of circulatory loop between the performers, where breath, sound, and movement flows back and forth in an eerie, symbiotic rhythm.

As the performers move, recline, and adjust on the shifting airbed, their gestures remain slow and deliberate. Yet within this softness is an undercurrent of unease. The performance dismantles any assumption of comfort by foregrounding the fragility and volatility of shared spaces, especially when constructed within systems that blur the line between care and

control.

The piece becomes a live study of duality and division, public versus private, closeness versus separation, support versus suffocation. Soeun Bae's work questions how bodies co-regulate within these boundaries, and what happens when those lines are intentionally collapsed or confused. It is a meditation on how the self is constantly formed and reformed through another, and how vulnerability is both a site of intimacy and potential rupture. In its totality, the performance is an evocative play of tension between softness and mechanism, surrender and resistance. It invites viewers to not only witness but to feel the delicacy of mutual existence, and to consider the emotional labor that intimacy demands, especially from women. It is, at once, an installation, a ritual, and a feminist provocation, redefining the bed not as a site of rest, but as a terrain of negotiation.

In the third performance of *Feminism Is Not Your Enemy*, Ibuki Kuramochi delivers a visceral, high-intensity but radically disrupted performance that draws on the traditions of *Noh*, the ancient Japanese theatrical form historically performed exclusively by men. Through a bold fusion of movement, projection, sound, and digital intervention, Kuramochi dissects the entangled legacies of patriarchy and cultural

inheritance, positioning the female body as both subject and agent of transformation.

Rather than adhering to the slow, meditative pacing of traditional *Noh*, Kuramochi's radical, dynamic movement rips through the performance space with force and urgency. Her gestures are erratic yet intentional, at times violent and eruptive as if physically breaking through the tightly constructed codes of tradition. In doing so, she unmask the often invisible constraints placed on women's bodies and identities under the guise of heritage.

Wearing a traditional *Noh* mask, Kuramochi's face becomes a paradoxical site: both visible and hidden, timeless and politicized: an AI-generated masculinized version of her elderly self alongside the static, stoic faces of a traditional elderly man mask and a Japanese woman mask. This visual interplay fractures the linear narrative of aging and gender serving as a speculative embodiment of societal expectations around aging and masculinity.

Behind her, a series of projected video collages features a provocative, uncanny, and hyperreal juxtaposition. Also the performance space is thick with a volatile mix of harsh electronic distortion. This sonic and visual dissonance amplifies the sense of rupture and resistance,

creating a space that was as overwhelming as it was immersive.

Kuramochi's radical physicality, in combination with technological manipulation and ritual aesthetics, gestured toward a post-human image of femininity: one that defies categorization, resists cultural fossilization, and actively rewrites the scripts of womanhood. She weaponizes performance to fracture time, tradition, and gender, offering instead a volatile, generative space of becoming. In *Feminism Is Not Your Enemy*, Kuramochi's performance functions as a call to reimagine lineage not as inheritance as well as as something to be interrupted, hacked, and made new through the body itself.

For the final performance of *Feminism Is Not Your Enemy*, Lena Chen transforms the gallery into a communal dining space, an intimate, radical act of gathering that blurs the lines between art, activism, and nourishment. In her participatory performance *Five Flavors*, Chen collaborates with local Asian American sex workers, including members of Red Canary Song, a Flushing-based coalition that advocates for the rights and safety of Asian and migrant massage parlor workers. Together, they prepare and serve five distinct dishes, each rich in cultural and emotional resonance.

The meal was not simply a gesture of hospitality. It was a community-based intervention into systems of exclusion and silencing, especially within mainstream feminist discourse. By bringing Asian American sex workers and audiences to the same table, Chen created a space where marginalized voices could not only be heard but nourished, honored, and centered. The performance reimagines the dining table not just as a site of consumption, but as a site of agency, storytelling, and solidarity.

Each dish represents a different facet of Asian American femme identity through flavor, texture, and presentation. They embodied the complexities of being both the one who consumes and the one consumed. Chen's work delves deeply into this duality, addressing the ways in which Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) women are often objectified, fetishized, commodified, and racialized, and how this objectification produces deeply contradictory sensations of pleasure and pain, violence and intimacy, oppression and power.

By making food the central medium of exchange, *Five Flavors* drew on ancestral rituals, domestic practices, and feminist strategies to challenge the historical erasure of sex workers, especially in feminist spaces where their inclusion has often been contested. The act of

preparing and sharing a meal together becomes a metaphor for the work of healing, resistance, and reclamation. Conversations unfold between bites, between strangers and kin, touching on personal histories, political struggles, and shared dreams. Chen's approach to performance is one of embodied dialogue where nourishment is not only physical, but intellectual and emotional. In this setting, the gallery becomes a living, breathing space of connection and transformation. In this quietly revolutionary act of sharing food, Chen reminds us that feminism, at its most radical, begins with who we invite to the table and what we are willing to taste, hear, and hold.

After the performances, the gallery space itself becomes an archive featuring videos, sculptural elements, and sound installations derived from the live works. This continuation invites viewers into sustained engagement, transforming the gallery into a cross-disciplinary, participatory site of dialogue and reflection. *Feminism Is Not Your Enemy* asks viewers to reconsider what feminism could mean, to confront their own assumptions, and to embrace the possibility of solidarity across differences. The exhibition acts as a declaration, a celebration, and an invitation to listen, to learn, and to act.

Joyce Chung

Joyce Chung is the Curator at Asian Arts Initiative in Philadelphia, where she oversees the exhibition and performance program. Her curatorial projects focus on the complexity of identity and representation through the lens of the politics of place. Chung is also interested in artistic exploration of struggles and hardship that are often overlooked, such as those of ethnic and gender minorities, women, and immigrants. She previously worked at a number of museums and galleries both in Korea and the United States, including the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, Hyundai Card, Kukje Gallery, as well as for the Gwangju Biennale and Performa, New York. Chung holds an MA in the Humanities with a concentration in Art History from the University of Chicago and a BA in Art History from Wesleyan University.

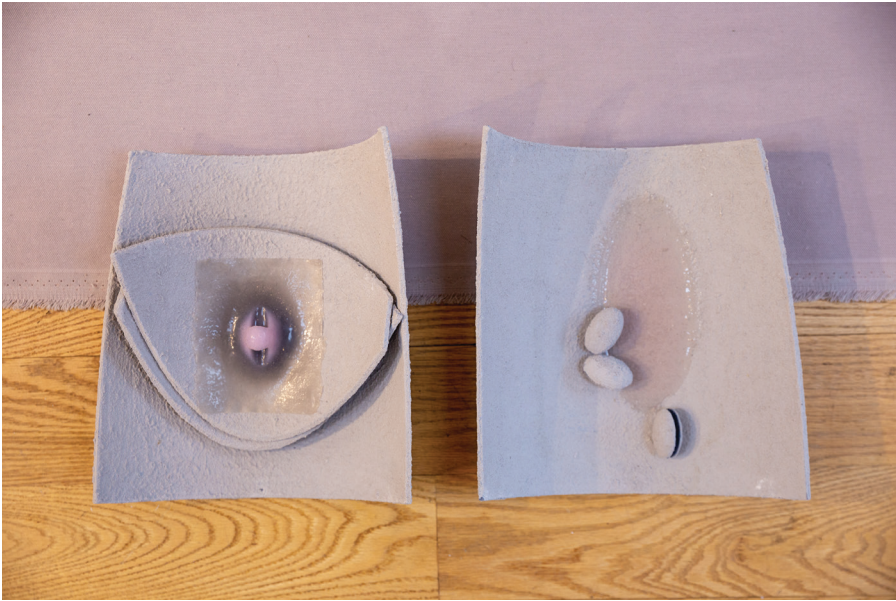
Exhibition View

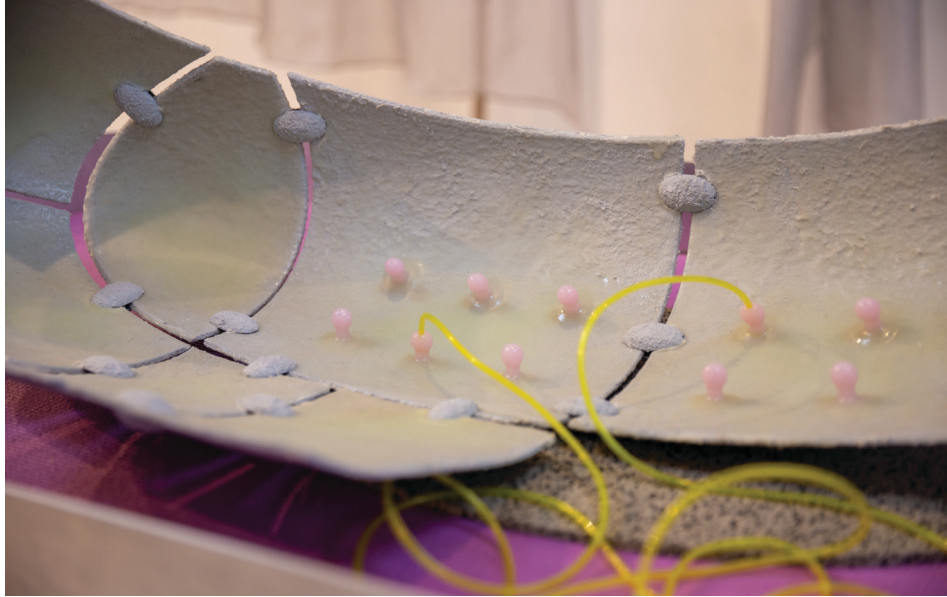


Feminism Is Not Your Enemy



































CHARLOTTE'S FOOD CAFE

Woman/migrant-run Korean food business
Delivery to Flushing / Catering all across NYC
Text or call 929-689-0000

Red Canary Song

Cost of Massage Work

Arrests for unlicensed massage - 1,900* increase
Arrests for unlicensed massage - prostitution - 2,200* increase
Noncitizens entrant - 87%
Prostitution (Class B Harassment) - <2 months prison - <\$500
Practicing without a license (Class E Felony) - <4 years prison
Police Raids - Cell phones
Embassies
Shame
Gangbust
Sexual harassment
Sexual assault
Sexual extortion

Genderification of Massage Work

Massage - 55 min
Asian Spa
Corporate Spa
Body work Ex. Shiatsu, Thai, Ayurvedic, Tui Na
Zen in name
Buddha statue
With fountain
Obtaining Massage License
Therapy school
Classes
Hours required
License Test

Flower Spa Menu

Cost for Asian identified people in the State of New York, from 2012-2016.
*To avoid felony charges, please obtain consent on behalf of human trafficking

SISTERS IN SELF-DEFENSE

Sisters in Self-Defense was formed by author Ava Chin and artist Alison Kuo in March of 2021, in response to the anti-Asian attacks on our community. Our aim is to provide not only self-defense instruction for women, queer-identifying people, and elders in our community, but also a space for folks to share their concerns and fears, as well as resources and information.

Email YourSisterInSelfDefense@gmail.com for a free Self Preservation Tips pdf.

EMPRESS WU

Dominatrix in NYC and beyond

PSYCHOSEXUAL PREDATOR
SEEKING SACRIFICIAL LAMBS

APPLY: EMPRESSWU.NET

FIVE FLAVORS

NEED to suffer?
You need CLEO

@cleoouyang
on IG, Twitter, Bluesky, OF

Apply at
cleoouyang.com

Too much blood?
Humors imbalanced?
Do we have a solution
FOR YOU

Contact Empress Wu's
rent-a-leech service
DM @thebitchempress_ on IG

Placemat design by Angel Tolentino
Created for *Five Flavors*, a performance installation by Lena Chen in collaboration with Charlotte, Cleo, Ellis, Yin, and Wu

Feminism Is Not Your Enemy
Curated by Joyce Chung
March 15-29, 2023
AHL Foundation
2085 Frederick Douglass Blvd
New York, NY 10020

Placemat design by Angel Tolentino

2025 AHL-AAPI Women Artist Cohort

FEMINISM

Soeun Bae



Lena Chen



IS NOT YOUR

Curated by Joyce Chung

Ibuki Kuramochi



hansa fae



ENEMY

2605 Frederick Douglass Blvd.,

#C1, New York, NY 10030

Opening Reception with Live Performances
March 15, 2025, 2-5 pm



March 15, 2025 – March 29, 2025

AAPI COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT FUND

Opening Performances

March 15, 2025

Feminism Is Not Your Enemy addressed how the misunderstood meaning of feminism has created a divide in society while exploring the actual definition of the movement. Feminism is a broad movement that encompasses liberal feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism, each with its own perspectives and priorities. This exhibition specifically focused on the intersectionality of the movement by taking into account the different experiences of oppression faced by racialized women.

The public opening reception, with live performances, was held from 2:00 to 5:00 PM on March 15, 2025. The exhibition was on view at the AHL Foundation from March 15 to March 29, 2025.

Centering the diverse voices of AAPI communities, the exhibition celebrated women's strength in building agency and challenging societal norms to create positive change. Styled as a "women artists' performance art festival," the opening day—Saturday, March 15, at AHL Gallery—featured four performances packed into a full-day program. This soft-power flex of an event offered a snapshot of feminist art today. Following the performances, visitors were invited to explore the gallery installation, which included video, sound, and sculptural elements used during the live works—creating an environment for ongoing reflection and engagement.

2:00 PM

GIRL VOICE by hamsa fae

hamsa fae creates a live, vocal sound installation that viscerally evokes the transfeminine experience. Incorporating the vibrations of shamans and ritualists of the Asian Pacific alongside the hyper-sexualized femme body, the artist explores social contracts associated with the female voice. Throughout the performance, audiences are encouraged to engage with her work by recording their personal voices with the prompt: how's this for a girl voice?

2:30 PM

My Private Sleepover Service by Soeun Bae
(Performed with Yuqing Liu)

Soeun Bae invites viewers to an intimate sleepover experience where two bodies become a central site of production which constantly dismantles ambiguous boundaries between individual zones. The performance brings a collective display of the artist's ongoing exploration of self-regulation and autonomy. As a testament to the organic connectedness of the whole, the work examines the questions raised by the dual and its split—between private and public, autonomy and dependency, and intimate and antagonistic partners.

3:00 PM

HUMAN PERFORMER by Ibuki Kuramochi

Ibuki Kuramochi incorporates *Noh*, an ancient Japanese performing art exclusively performed by men. The work traces entanglements of patriarchy and tradition, offering counter-narratives of resistance and transformation through the female body. During the performance, the artist wears a traditional Noh mask while projected video features an AI-generated masculinized version of her elderly self, alongside the faces of a traditional elderly man mask and a traditional Japanese woman mask to bring into question the established binary understanding of gender and age.

3:30 PM

Five Flavors by Lena Chen

Lena Chen converts the gallery into a dining space where she will serve five dishes in collaboration with local Asian American sex workers, including members of Red Canary Song, a Flushing-based coalition that advocates for the rights of Asian and migrant massage parlor workers. By inviting Asian Americans and sex workers to the table, this community-based intervention addresses long-standing issues of exclusion in the feminist movement and creates spaces for self-expression, a fundamental theme of her work. Her work *Five Flavors* centers feminist discussion of consumption and being consumed and the ways in which these objectifications can provoke contradictory feelings of violence, pleasure, oppression, and power for API women.

* The order above reflects the sequence of the opening performances held on March 15, 2025, and does not correspond to the alphabetical order presented in the catalog.

Soeun Bae



Soeun Bae was born in South Korea, raised in Alabama, and now based in New York. Bae works with sculpture, technology, and performance to question what it is to be living inside of a body. She participated in Wave Hill's Sunroom Project, and completed residencies at Anderson Ranch Arts Center (CO) and NARS Foundation (NY), and Velvetpark Media (NY). Bae completed her BFA in Sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2023.

My Private Sleepover Service

2025

My Private Sleepover Service began with a new mode of performative research: Studio Sleepovers, functioning as an after-hours studio visit and an embodied research on services and duets. I held the sleepovers in my live/work studio at Velvetpark Media (NY), a six-month residency program for queer artists. I selected and invited a range of people, just one person at a time, to fall asleep with me and my objects in my studio. We make the air mattress bed together, do a rotating set of activities, girl talk, attach body extensions, take melatonin, and fall asleep. It began as my interest in detachment, sensuality, synchronization, and rest. Sleep as a site for performance, labor, and intimacy. My body as a source of production.

My Private Sleepover Service is an installation-based performance series that builds on objects and movements from the Studio Sleepovers. I explore notions of serving as a female body-object. I place myself between private/public, autonomy/dependency, romance/detachment, pet/animal, and user/object.

My work delves into politics of care, sexuality, and production. I make pleasurable objects that present a depersonalized and desensitized way of relating to our bodies. In need of regeneration and transformation in a world of consumption and utilization. I point towards

vulnerable bodies—femme, queer, poc—through reimaginings that reflect experiences of isolation and dysfunction in a personal and socio-political body. I explore the dissection, mechanization, and objectification to birth a hybrid body that holds potential for optimization as it becomes altered, tested, and used. My objects have a desire to be self-regulating, self-performing, and autonomous Objects that transform, that can't stay still. They want to be touched, drained, injected, to live, to resist, to take control of their own self. Through my work, I seek sensation overload.

















Ibuki Kuramochi



Ibuki Kuramochi is a Japanese-born interdisciplinary artist specializing in *Butoh* dance, performance, video, installation, and painting. Her work delves into the poetic physicality of *Butoh* and themes of metamorphosis, Womankind, and sexuality. Since 2016, she has trained with Yoshito Ohno at the renowned Kazuo Ohno *Butoh* Dance Studio. Kuramochi's work has been exhibited internationally in New York, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Paris, and Rome, and she was featured as Artist of the Year in LA WEEKLY's "People 2019." She is a recipient of the 2024 City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Performing Arts Division awards and the 2022 SCIART Ambassador Fellowship. Recent highlights include exhibitions at the Torrance Art Museum, PST Art and Science Collide presented by Getty, and Craiova Art Museum Romania, as well as lectures at art college in Tokyo and the NY Film Academy.

Ibuki Kuramochi, *Prenatal Memory and Species*, HD video installation, 5 min 58sec, 2022

HUMAN PERFORMER

2022

My work delves into the theme of physicality, intertwining digital media with the movements of Butoh, a distinctive Japanese modern dance form.

HUMAN PERFORMER revisits questions of Asian(Japanese) female physicality, patriarchy, tradition, and the constructed nature of gender within the framework of post-human feminism.

Butoh, often termed the “dance of darkness,” was conceived by Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno in the aftermath of World War II as a means to re-establish Japanese cultural identity. It diverged from modernization and Western dance styles, instead grounding itself in enigmatic principles such as philosophy, the subconscious, primal instincts, and ancient, inscrutable myths.

Tradition is the strong identity of the Japanese people, and out of proportion to capitalist social development, it continues to reign as a source of pride in its prestigious beauty, hiding the absurdity hidden within its traditions. Notably, Japan ranked 118th out of 146 countries in the 2024 Global Gender Gap Index, reflecting persistent gender disparities, particularly in political representation.

This work incorporates *Noh*, an ancient Japanese performing art that has long been inaccessible to women.

Historically, *Noh* and other traditional Japanese cultural forms were exclusively performed by men, with male actors taking on female roles. Performers don masks to embody characters in a spiritual realm inhabited by humans, spirits, demons, and deities. Among them, the *Okina* mask, representing an elderly man, holds the highest prestige. It stands as a powerful symbol of male dominance in the arts, reinforcing a history of patriarchy and the systematic exclusion of women.

In this piece, I amalgamate these visages—an AI-generated masculinized version of my elderly self, the face of a traditional elderly man mask, and that of a traditional Japanese woman mask—to interrogate the very foundations of tradition, gendered value systems, and the constructs of age. This exploration seeks to unravel the privileged associations embedded in gender and age, questioning the equation of MAN = human being.

A male *Butoh* dancer once told me that a male performer wearing female attire and playing a female role represents the highest state in performing arts. This statement has lingered in my mind for a long time. It made me question the implications of such a perspective—why is it that a man embodying a woman is considered the pinnacle of artistic expression, while the presence of actual female performers is often ignored or diminished?

















Lena Chen



Lena Chen (b. 1987, San Francisco) explores care, intimacy, race, and gender through an artistic practice spanning performance, new media, and socially engaged art. Collaborating with communities including sex workers, reproductive health workers, and trauma survivors, she has exhibited, screened, and performed her work internationally. Awarded Mozilla Foundation's Creative Media Award and Best Emerging Talent at B3 Biennial of the Moving Image, her art is in the collections of the Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art, the MUST Museo del territorio in Vimercate, Italy, and the University of California, Irvine. Currently pursuing a Ph.D. in performance studies at UC Berkeley, she earned a B.A. in sociology from Harvard University and a M.F.A. at the Carnegie Mellon School of Art.

Lena Chen and Juliana Fadil-Luchkiw, *Mother of Whores*,
digital still from video performance at Pergamon Museum(Berlin, Germany), 2023

Five Flavours

2025

Lena Chen converts the gallery into a dining space where she serves five dishes in collaboration with local Asian American sex workers, including members of Red Canary Song, a Flushing-based coalition that advocates for the rights of Asian and migrant massage parlor workers. Each dish corresponds to a different flavor from traditional Chinese medicine:

1. Sauteed Cumin Flavor Sliced Lamb in Drywok
孜然黑山羊 (spicy)
2. Minced Pork with Sour String Bean
酸豆角肉末 (sour)
3. Beef with Broccoli
芥兰牛 (bitter)
4. Sauteed Eggplant with Salted Egg Yolk
金沙茄子 (salty)
5. Sliced Oranges (sweet)

By inviting Asian Americans and sex workers to the proverbial table, this community-based intervention addresses long-standing issues of exclusion in the feminist movement while offering a history of cultural assimilation, appropriation, and representation through the metaphor of Chinese American cuisine.

As part of the project, the artist collaborated with Angel Tolentino to produce 100 limited edition placemats inspired by placemats in Hong Kong diners from the San Gabriel Valley.

















hamsa fae



hamsa fae (b. Los Angeles) is a trans, Vietnamese-French contemporary artist and who works in performance, sound, movement, and sculpture. Applying a decade of research in shamanism and land-based inquiry, her concepts engage audiences to remember the in-between and othering. Their performances open portals into ethereality — a subconscious space for reclaiming ancestral traditions and queer identities often unseen/unsung.

Her recent works have been exhibited at the Mingei International Museum, Bread & Salt, Athenaeum Art Center, and Fronte San Ysidro. Her solo exhibition, *Trans Aphrodisia*, was in 2024 at the Brown Building. She is the curator of the AAPI Emerging Artist Fellowship based in San Diego, California.

hamsa fae, *GIRL VOICE*, photography by Nico Reano in the creation of *GIRL VOICE*, 22 minutes, 2025

GIRL VOICE

2025

GIRL VOICE experiments with the layers of the transfeminine voice as a bridge for reclaiming indigeneity while contemplating the pressures of gender passibility. The live performance experiments with sound loops that carry a spectrum of cultural history, especially remembering the vibrations of third gender shamans, spirit mediums, and ritualists across the Asian Pacific.

The performance redefines what a woman's voice is socially programmed to sound like, while using the hyper-sexualized femme body to disrupt the expectations of the male gaze. The work breaks collective dysphoria of trans folks and the post-colonial constructs that oppresses one's connection to ancestral identity. *GIRL VOICE* socially engages audiences to loop and archive their voice into the sound installation by using the verbal prompt, "how's this for a girl voice?", as an act that questions male supremacy culture.

I use the body to channel the mourning, suffering, and grief held in non-regenerating land to translate the invisible sounds that hide in the density of matrix reality. With five years of research pertaining to the vibrational climate of San Diego/Kumeyaay oceans and forests, the work re-enchants audiences with the empathetic requirement to participate in modern collective

consciousness, including the terrors of anti-trans legislation and further human separation/dissociation of living on stolen land. The work intends to sift out discomfort, to re-embody the cultural initiations of re-stewarding and protecting land, as previous ancestors have practiced.

The audience structure is used to remember the rituals of ceremony as an act for counseling the future head. By using the voices of live audience members including— Asia Stewart, Mark Hepworth, Luwin Changco, Horus Porras, Lena Chen, Souen Bae, and Ibuki Kuramochi, Yuqing, and Jared Hoffman— the work alchemizes the harmonies of humanity and the ephemerality of vocal ranges. Visitors are invited to kneel on a rabbit hide to meditate with the sound installation which is connected to a found conch shell from San Diego/Kumeyaay.

















Photography Credits

All photos are courtesy of the AHL Foundation
unless otherwise specified.

Installation views and opening reception photos
on pages 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21,
22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39,
42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57,
58, 59, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69 were taken by
Misun Jin.

Except:

p. 53: Photo: Solomon Oh

p. 57: Photo on the top: Solomon Oh

List of Works

Soeun Bae

My Private Sleepover Service

Performance-based installation, dimensions
variable, 2025
pp. 16–19

Ibuki Kuramochi

HUMAN PERFORMER

Performance-based installation, dimensions
variable, 2022
pp. 22–23

hamsa fae

GIRL VOICE

Sound installation, found shell, rabbit fur hide, 22
minutes, 2025
pp. 24–27

Lena Chen

Five Flavors

Performance-based installation, dimensions
variable, 2025
pp. 28–31 (Placemat design by Angel Tolentino)

Chinese Touch

Single-Channel Video, 3 minutes 6 seconds, 2023
P. 28, P. 30

This exhibition and publication were made possible by the generous support of the AAPI Community Development Fund (AAPF CDF). Unless otherwise noted, all texts are copyrighted by their respective authors and right holders. Image credits for artworks not photographed by the AHL Foundation are listed on the corresponding pages.

This publication features the typefaces ABC Social Edu and ABC Diatype Mono by Dinamo, as well as bianzhidai designed by Xiaoyuan Gao.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission from the AHL Foundation.

ISBN: 979-8-218-64962-3

