

AFTER LIFE (WHAT REMAINS) JUNE 16 — JULY 21, 2018

RIGHT NOW, IN THE AMAZING MOMENT THAT TO US COUNTS AS THE PRESENT, WE ARE DECIDING, WITHOUT QUITE MEANING TO, WHICH EVOLUTIONARY PATHWAYS WILL REMAIN OPEN AND WHICH WILL FOREVER BE CLOSED. NO OTHER CREATURE HAS EVER MANAGED THIS, AND IT WILL, UNFORTUNATELY, BE OUR MOST ENDURING LEGACY. THE SIXTH EXTINCTION WILL CONTINUE TO DETERMINE THE COURSE OF LIFE LONG AFTER EVERYTHING PEOPLE HAVE WRITTEN AND PAINTED AND BUILT HAS BEEN GROUND INTO DUST AND GIANT RATS HAVE—OR HAVE NOT—INHERITED THE EARTH.

— ELIZABETH KOLBERT, *THE SIXTH EXTINCTION*

Welcome to AFTER LIFE: an experiment in imagining what remains after environmental catastrophe, militarized destruction, settler colonialism, and the everyday terrors of the Anthropocene have laid the most precarious to waste. AFTER LIFE is a place to develop new ethics of relationality—or ways of living and being with one another to collectively rebirth a dying planet. Let's visit the AFTER LIFE, together.

In the first two pieces by Alejandro T. Acierto and Rea Tajiri, ghostly matters leave their mark. Alejandro T. Acierto reaches back into the American colonial archives of the Philippines, unearthing images of native peoples taken by photographers, administrators, and the military who used them to classify, contain, and kill with impunity. Through a sleight of hand, he protects his *kababayan* by spiriting them away from these dehumanizing frames. In *a suspending* (2018), Acierto leaves behind the spectral imprint of a young Filipino boy, who haunts the white American hands that would dare to control the scene. This work reminds us that vanishing is one strategy of resistance—as maroons, Buffalo soldiers, and guerillas have done (and continue to do) as acts of defiance, risk, and survival.

Seeking to illuminate the hidden, Rea Tajiri goes home to Lordville in her 2014 hybrid documentary of the same name. In this tiny hamlet in upstate New York, rivers suddenly change course, and the elements take back homes, gardens, and other human-built places. Throughout, Tajiri is a patient witness to Lordville's beleaguered residents, who persist despite the hostility of the landscape. The film is unsettling, implicating the filmmaker's own complicated relationship to being a homeowner on land stolen from the Lenape people. It offers no easy solution for Asian Americans who want to ethically live in a state that continues its foundational violence against Indigenous peoples—even for those who, like Tajiri's family, were incarcerated as “enemy aliens” by the US during World War II.

Super Futures Haunt Collective (E. Sam Jung, Angie Morrill, and C. Ree) takes on the ambiguity of Asian American-Indigenous collaboration and contestation directly through a series of visitations by future ghosts Lady HOW (Haunting or Whatever), Agent O, and SFAOW (Specularity: Fugitive-Alterity Or Whatever) in varied locales including LA's Koreatown and the Oregon Coast. Unlike Acierto's vanishing acts, SFHQ refuse to stay gone. Their random appearances in sites of fast fashion, luxury accommodation, and coastal isolation insist on revealing to us the simultaneous presence of indigeneity and militarism everywhere; their persistence is a call for decolonization that needs to be practiced by all non-Indigenous people, even those who experience racism themselves as people of color. In conversation with scholars Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, Super Futures Haunt Collective reminds us that decolonization is not merely metaphorical or linguistic, but is visceral, lived, and material. Decolonization might look funny sometimes, but it is deadly serious work. And it needs to happen, right now.

Serious at play, Michael Arcega's sculptures can help us shift our views on housing and homelessness, strengthening what artist Saya Woolfalk calls our “empathic optic.” In Seattle today—as in the artist's adopted city of San Francisco and his birthplace of Manila—the housing crisis is hitting unprecedented proportions. Unhoused and insecurely housed people are being terrorized out of their tent cities, their possessions and very lives at risk of destruction: victims of simultaneous state negligence and constant surveillance. *In Tents: Refuse* (2010) transforms the trash can into a tent, or vice versa, and is a deceptively playful visualization of the multiple forms of violence meted against the unhoused. It also gestures to another technique practiced by dispossessed people throughout the world: making home, and life, out of what has been discarded as waste.

AFTER LIFE's last resident artist, Leeroy New, continues in this vein with their Instagram-viral photo and performance series *Aliens of Manila* (2014-ongoing). The aliens are visitors whose extraterrestrial appendages and costumes have been fashioned from salvaged materials including PVC pipes, buckets, and bottles. These friendly beings may simply be curious collectors of human refuse launched into outer space or dumped into the ocean's depths: avant-garde mannequins of the latest synthetic wearables. But what if we speculate that these humanoid-plastic hybrids have mutated not to live on a damaged planet far away, but so that they may safely inhabit Manila's contemporary scapes, where the Pasig River is bloated with both plastics and the bodies of those killed in the nation's ongoing “War on Drugs”? What lessons can be learned about living differently with, and amongst, the waste and the wasted?

Deploying haunting, humor, fantasy, and speculation, the artists in AFTER LIFE dare to dream an existence more just than the present. As you leave this space, ask yourself: what do you want to leave behind, what do you want to create anew, and what do you want to remain, after all of this?

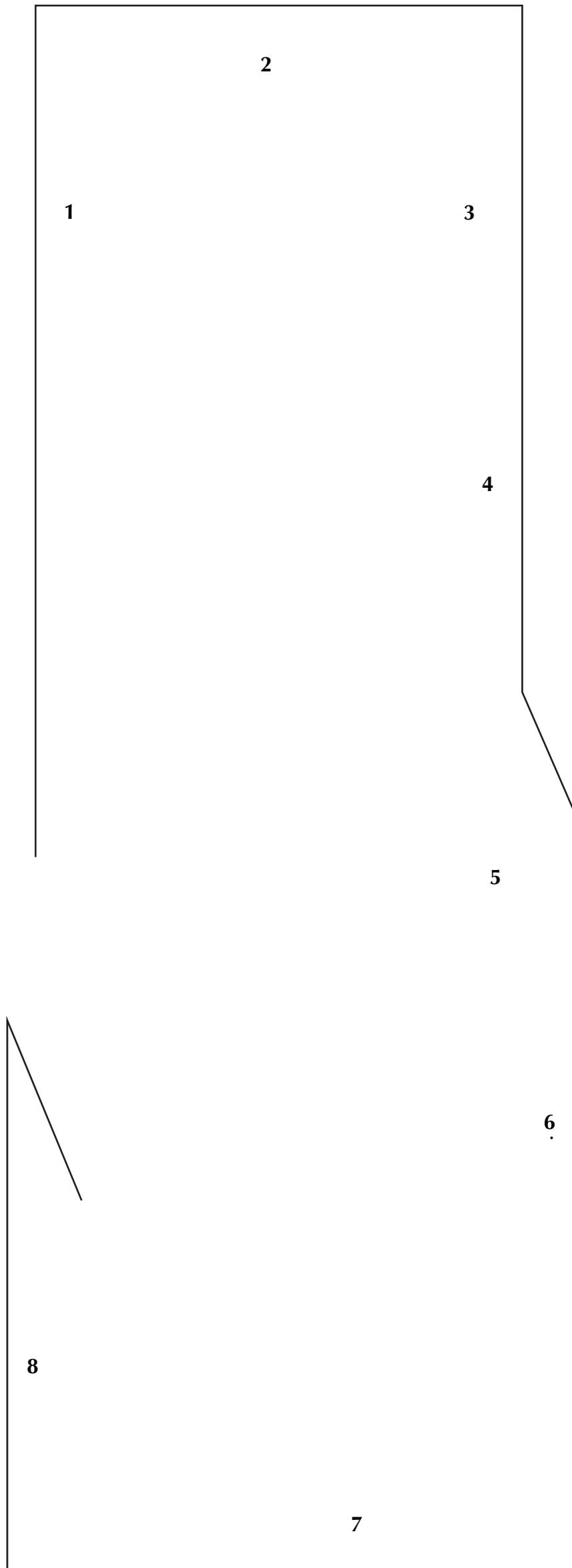
Thea Quiray Tagle, *Curator* | The Alice Gallery



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curated by Thea Quiray Tagle



1. Rea Tajiri
Lordville
experimental documentary (67:00), 2014
2. Alejandro T. Acierto
a suspending
dye sublimation on poly charmeuse with nylon trim,
Edition 1 of 2, 9' x 4', 2018
3. Super Futures Haunt Collective
Visiting Artists Visitation: Peggy's House, 2114
inkjet print on archival matte, 26" x 37", 2018
4. Super Futures Haunt Collective
*Visitation: From Chiloquin to Seattle
Via the Specularity, 2118*
postcards and audio piece, 2018
5. Super Futures Haunt Collective
*Regeneration Tank/Visitation: Belknap Hot Springs,
2118 + 2114*
video (0:35) with vintage television, 2018
6. Super Futures Haunt Collective
Arrival/Visitation: Cape Kiwanda, 2114
inkjet print on archival matte, 63" x 41.5", 2018
7. Michael Arcega
In Tents: Refuse
poly-tarp, tent poles, mosquito netting, ropes, and mixed
media, 2010
8. Leeroy New
Aliens of Manila
inkjet print on professional semi-matte, 44" x 44", 2018