

In Practice: You may go, but this will bring you back

March 25-August 2, 2021

For Immediate Release

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EXHIBITION

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SculptureCenter



Zora Neale Hurston, *Fieldwork Footage*, 1928, video still.

SculptureCenter announces the 25th edition of In Practice, its signature open call and exhibition, with new commissions by 11 artists

Carlos Agredano, Leslie Cuyjet, Kyrae Dawaun, Dominique Duroseau, Hugh Hayden, Sunny Leerasanthanah, Abigail Lucien, André Magaña, Catalina Ouyang, Chiffon Thomas, and Quay Quinn Wolf

Long Island City, NY – In Practice: You may go, but this will bring you back, the twenty-fifth iteration of SculptureCenter’s signature open call exhibition, features newly commissioned works by eleven artists: **Carlos Agredano, Leslie Cuyjet, Kyrae Dawaun, Dominique Duroseau, Hugh Hayden, Sunny Leerasanthanah, Abigail Lucien, André Magaña, Catalina Ouyang, Chiffon Thomas, and Quay Quinn Wolf**. Opening on March 25, 2021, the exhibition will include sculpture, audio works, and video installations in the ground-floor reception area and across the lower-level galleries. The exhibition is curated by 2021 In Practice Curatorial Fellow **Katherine Simone Reynolds**, who holds a curatorial position at the Luminary in St. Louis and is an artist; her work was included in *In*

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Practice: Other Objects at SculptureCenter in 2019. It will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalog and a season of online programming that includes performances and an artist roundtable.

In Practice: You may go, but this will bring you back investigates the notion of non-resolution through the lens of loss, grief, and mortality. In both psychology and art, “processing” and “process” suggest an arrival at a final, settled—if uncomposed—state. By contrast, the artists in the exhibition treat process as a metaphysical cycle of return, producing works as detritus, residue, or ideas to be revisited and revised. The exhibition asks: How can we navigate the unending notion of process and procession through a softer lens? What would it look like for us to move not toward resolution but toward a constant, comfortably unresolved state? What if there is no such thing as closure?

The works in the exhibition engage with these questions, giving way to a discourse with both physical and affective dimensions. The artists create subtle eulogies within architectural sites that are conspicuously void of human actors; they congregate objects that suggest loss yet anticipate their next use, using audio to disperse presence into an impermanent, atmospheric space. Other works address complex issues of food insecurity, investigate therapeutic theater with strangers, and engage in conversations about necropolitics and healing. They take the forms of aching, faltering foundations; mine familial affection and disconnection; and enact material and emotional subsidence, sinking or settling into open-ended or precarious states. The exhibition expands on the idea that the clarity that is sought, whether through external expression like artmaking or through interior work, becomes a pitfall of unanswered questions and programmed coping mechanisms.

When process is associated with resolution, things can be edited and misremembered out of the need to preserve a fragile emotional state, authenticating our anesthetized hold on reality. The title for the 2021 In Practice exhibition references the work of American author, anthropologist, and filmmaker Zora Neale Hurston. In one of her groundbreaking anthropological fieldwork films documenting Black American folklife in 1928, Hurston records a baptism that seems to depict such a fraught feeling of closure. Two elders submerge a young woman in a large body of water, in a ritual symbolizing a rebirth of self, cleansed of sin and the wrongdoings of the world. After she emerges, the woman is walked out of the frame as she wipes her face of the holy water, a gesture that could be seen as marking her return to “normalcy” or even comfort. A contemporary YouTube video¹ pairs this rare footage with a later recording of Hurston’s own crackling voice singing, “You may go, but this will bring you back.”

As the baptized woman exits, Hurston’s song begs the questions: What is the thing that will bring us back, and what will it bring us back to? We seek the submersive consolation of resolution, but then are still tasked with navigating the dry land of a “reality” in the effort to apply an understanding, dismissing the tension of what it means to stand in the haunting contusion within the waters of that “peculiar sensation” of a Du Boisian double-consciousness.² Within the exhibition, concepts of healing and the presentation of self for others subtly point towards this peculiar embodiment of Black affect with no resolution in sight. The works on view suggest that seeking a resolution is akin to seeking a mirage: it was never anything more than an illusion, cloaked in a taunt of restoration.

¹ Andrew Rasmussen, “Zora Neale Hurston Fieldwork 1928,” f video, 6:44, August 11, 2013, <https://youtu.be/wtPrN-zYZc4>.

² W. E. B. DuBois, “Strivings of the Negro People,” *Atlantic*, August 1897, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1897/08/strivings-of-the-negro-people/305446/>. Du Bois defines double-consciousness as “this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.

Artist Projects

Installed at the entrance of SculptureCenter, **Carlos Agredano**'s work—a block of ice, created with water sourced from Ellis Island and the Rio Grande, melting inside of a delivery box—reflects on detainment practices in the United States, including the utilization of shipping technology to surveil customers. **Chiffon Thomas** presents visual representations of beings in a perpetual state of entrapment through forms they refer to as “impossible bodies”—a means of representing the physical and psychological states with which marginalized people contend in sociopolitical systems.

Dominique Duroseau's audio installation continues her series of interrogative interventions exploring Black presence, Black existence, and their erasure. Her project unpacks dimensions of subjectivity and asks: Is presence permanent? Comprising solid bricks of raw cocoa butter carved with the names of Black people killed by police since the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, **Abigail Lucien**'s installation creates a space for Black individuals to grieve and process. **Leslie Cuyjet**'s video installation combines recorded and found video to evoke a confessional and a meditation, addressing the question: What is the value of Black life and death?

André Magaña's 3D-printed terra cotta, sandstone, and obsidian-colored vessels and objects allude to Colima ceramics found in western Mexican shaft tombs. In modeling the works after Mexican-American comfort food containers, Magaña references the dispersion of contemporary Mexican-American experiences. In **Sunny Leerasanthanah**'s video installation, male actors play the role Leerasanthanah's deceased father, improvising responses to prompts that the artist reads. The purpose of the dialogue is not to achieve accuracy, but to represent something that never happened, suggesting that the relief the artist seeks is not to know the answers, but to ask these questions in the first place. Utilizing a multimedia landscape consisting of sculpture, video works, and recorded mother-daughter poetry readings over Zoom, **Catalina Ouyang**'s installation is situated within the violence of the political climate while discussing crisis, memory, trauma, and emergence.

Looking at the ubiquitous New York City subway bench—intended for public use, but designed to inhibit sleeping—**Hugh Hayden**'s work interrogates the passive aggression within a neoliberal society. **Quay Quinn Wolf**'s project continues the artist's long-standing interest in complicating the associations between menswear and societal notions of masculinity. Looking at the domestic space as a point of departure, **Kyrae Dawaun** interrogates concepts of nourishment and neglect through an installation that pairs homemade cereal with a color field of painted lead dioxide, furthering his investigation into accessibility politics, sustenance, and agency.

About In Practice

SculptureCenter's In Practice open call program supports emerging artists and curators in creating new work for exhibition at SculptureCenter. Since 2003, In Practice has provided more than 200 artists with the essential resources of space, funding, time, curatorial support, and administrative guidance to help turn their ideas into reality.

Exemplifying the spirit of SculptureCenter's mission, In Practice supports innovative artwork, fosters experimentation, and introduces audiences to underrecognized practices and new ideas. The program offers participants the opportunity to develop and present work in what is often their first institutional exhibition in New York City. Previous In Practice participants include Korakrit Arunanondchai, Fia Backström, A.K. Burns, Crystal Z Campbell, Aleksandra Domanović, Brendan Fernandes, Raque Ford, Jules Gimbrone, Samara Golden, Ellen Harvey, Madeline Hollander, Elizabeth Jaeger, Meredith James, Baseera

Khan, Simone Leigh, Molly Lowe, Justin Matherly, Essex Olivares, Virginia Overton, Marlo Pascual, Sean Raspet, Rachel Rose, Xaviera Simmons, Josh Smith, Valerie Snobeck, Agathe Snow, Kenneth Tam, Marianne Vitale, and Jon Wang, among many others.

SculptureCenter opens the In Practice application season each spring, with the selected artists traditionally exhibiting the following winter. More than 1,000 artists submitted proposals for the 2021 In Practice exhibition. To learn more about the program, visit www.sculpture-center.org/in_practice.

About SculptureCenter

SculptureCenter leads the conversation on contemporary art by supporting artistic innovation and independent thought highlighting sculpture's specific potential to change the way we engage with the world. Positioning artists' work in larger cultural, historical, and aesthetic contexts, SculptureCenter discerns and interprets emerging ideas. Founded by artists in 1928, SculptureCenter provides an international forum that connects artists and audiences by presenting exhibitions, commissioning new work, and generating scholarship.

Since relocating to Long Island City in 2001, SculptureCenter has presented works by over 900 artists through its annual exhibition program, and today, it is considered one of New York's most important kunsthalls. Placing importance on investment, inclusiveness, independence, transparency, and rigor, SculptureCenter has developed a strong reputation for championing underrecognized and emerging artists, many of whom have gone on to celebrated and substantial careers; these include Nairy Baghramian, Sanford Biggers, Tom Burr, Liz Glynn, Rochelle Goldberg, Leslie Hewitt, Tishan Hsu, Rashid Johnson, Rindon Johnson, Ugo Rondinone, Gedi Sibony, Alexandre Singh, Monika Sosnowska, Mika Tajima, Jesse Wine, Turner Prize winner Charlotte Prodger and nominee Anthea Hamilton, and Hugo Boss Prize winners Anicka Yi and Simone Leigh. SculptureCenter continuously offers a dynamic series of free public programs and events including artist talks, performances, film screenings, and publications.

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