

# Searching the Sky for Rain

Sep 16 – Dec 16, 2019

## For Immediate Release

### RELEASE DATE

June 13, 2019

### EXHIBITION

Searching the Sky for Rain

### DATES

Sep 16 – Dec 16, 2019

### OPENING EVENT

Sun, Sept 15, 2018  
5-8pm

### MEDIA CONTACT

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**“...the Self is lost. That’s one less thing to worry about.”  
— Tishan Hsu**

Long Island City, NY — This exhibition brings together works by artists who disregard the ways in which the art industry regulates, classifies, compartmentalizes, and essentializes difference into sanctioned categories. The artists in *Searching the Sky for Rain* defy the fracking of particularities into niche-marketed, T-shirt formulations of “identities” for institutional meaning and value production. These exploitative processes administer domination, forcing heterogeneity into operational packages for the stylization of a lukewarm cosmopolitanism.

The resulting rhetorical conflation of the maker and the work has led some producers to contend for the most bona fide representation in a highly competitive field where “authenticity” is rewarded as the primary source of value. While the proclaimed dominant position enjoys a hotline to abstract and structural thinking, others are often accorded only bare biography or story-time “feels” in the critical consideration and institutional presentation of their work. The question raised by *Searching the Sky for Rain* is: who has the right to abstraction? This question is neither a “theme” nor is necessarily the main concern of the included works, but it is at times one of their many components, or is indicative of a discursive ambivalence toward the worn-out framing devices that are formulated by the industry.

Against the backdrop of today’s hyper-expressionism, which in the absence of reflexivity poses the “self” as a coordinate with direct access to “truth,” the works in this exhibition advance the subject’s inherent non-sovereignty and unlocatability. As a character in Beckett MWN’s audio work *Paranoid House* puts it, “anytime individuality is institutionally mandated it becomes a performance.”

Using various methodologies and strategies, the artists in the exhibition resist prescribing or following readily available image templates, relinquishing the pop-up politics of instant visibility. In Tony Cokes' video *Evil.27.Selma*, we read how the pre-television civil rights movement prompted a "social collectivity heavily dependent on the imagination" that created abundance of "fantasy what-if" scenarios. The artists in *Searching the Sky for Rain* rally for such not-yet-articulated aesthetics. The exhibition is curated by **Sohrab Mohebbi**, Curator, with **Kyle Dancewicz**, Director of Exhibitions and Programs.

The exhibition includes work by: Carmen Argote, Tony Cokes, Rafael Domenech, Mandy El-Sayegh, Charles Gaines, ektor garcia, Jacqueline Kiyomi Gordon, Tishan Hsu, Rindon Johnson, Becket MWN, Shahryar Nashat, Michael Queenland, Johanna Unzueta, Jala Wahid, Eric Wesley, and Riet Wijnen.

## 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.

For nearly 20 years, SculptureCenter has presented works by over 750 emerging and established artists through its annual exhibition program, and today, SculptureCenter is considered one of New York's most adventurous kunsthallen. Placing importance on investment, inclusiveness, independence, transparency, and rigor, SculptureCenter has developed a strong reputation for championing under-recognized and emerging artists, many of whom have gone on to celebrated and substantial careers such as: Turner Prize winner Charlotte Prodger and nominee Anthea Hamilton, Sanford Biggers, Nairy Baghramian, Tom Burr, Liz Glynn, Rochelle Goldberg, Camille Henrot, Leslie Hewitt, Rashid Johnson, Ugo Rondinone, Katrín Sigurdardóttir, Alexandre Singh, Monika Sosnowska, Gedi Sibony, Mika Tajima, and recent Hugo Boss Prize winners Anicka Yi and Simone Leigh.

As a non-collecting museum, SculptureCenter's annual exhibition program includes 1–2 commissioning programs by mid-career artists, 10–15 projects by emerging artists, and 3–6 solo and group exhibitions in addition to an exciting series of special projects by established and emerging artists.

SculptureCenter continuously offers a dynamic series of free public programs and events that feature artist talks, performances, film screenings, and publications.

*Searching the Sky for Rain* is made possible with financial support from the Mondriaan Fund, the public cultural funding organization focusing on visual arts and cultural heritage. Additional support is provided as part of the Dutch Culture USA program by the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York.

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Image: Rindon Johnson, *So it's pretty big, it's about twice the size of my fist, you can hear the bag is crunching as I turn it over, there's not a single animal, no insect, nothing, it is so old it reflects back blue light, so on a very clear, cool day, it is hard to say where it is that the sun meets the sky.*, 2018, detail. Rawhide and white cotton rope. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and AALA Gallery, Los Angeles.