

# SculptureCenter to present first solo institutional exhibition of artist Diane Severin Nguyen featuring a newly commissioned video work

For Immediate Release

RELEASE DATE

June 17, 2021

EXHIBITION

Diane Severin Nguyen

EXHIBITION DATES

September 16 -  
December 13, 2021

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Long Island City, NY — SculptureCenter is pleased to announce the first solo institutional exhibition of Diane Severin Nguyen opening at SculptureCenter on September 16, 2021. Curated by Sohrab Mohebbi, Curator-at-Large, the show will present a newly commissioned video and installation in the ground floor galleries. The exhibition is co-organized with the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, where it will be on view in spring 2022. The Chicago presentation is curated by Myriam Ben Salah, Director and Chief Curator. A publication – the artist’s first – will accompany the exhibition.

Diane Severin Nguyen’s exhibition is built around a new moving image work co-commissioned by both institutions and filmed in 2021. Set in Warsaw, Poland, the film loosely follows the character of an orphaned Vietnamese child who grows up to be absorbed into a South Korean pop-inspired dance group. Widely popular within a Polish youth subculture, K-pop is used by the artist as a vernacular material to trace a relationship between Eastern Europe and Asia with roots in Cold War allegiances.

This dichotomy of the East and the West is further complicated by the significant Vietnamese diaspora currently living in Poland, composed of Northerners who migrated before the fall of the Iron Curtain, and Southerners who came in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. While such inherited divisions may be invisible to the majority culture in which they are situated, Nguyen traces how these layered inner conflicts are reckoned within the process of finding shared symbols and naming oneself from within another’s regime. Consistent with Nguyen’s long term artistic concerns, this inquiry probes the paradoxes inherent to photography: how can self-actualization happen within the unifying realm of representation? How can a medium that excludes or suppresses parts of reality exceed the failures and omissions of language?

For the project, Nguyen assembled a crew of teenaged Polish dancers who perform original choreography set to music and lyrics co-written by the artist. By arranging these trained bodies, who are invited to “lose themselves to the new image,” as Nguyen’s lyrics suggest, the artist looks at both the exaltation and erasure of personal traumas at play in the process of representation, identity building, and the formation of a shared nation space.

The production of Nguyen’s video work in Poland was supported by U-jazdowski Residencies, Warsaw.

Leadership support of SculptureCenter’s exhibitions and programs is provided by Carol Bove, Jill and Peter Kraus, Lee Elliott and Robert K. Elliott, Eleanor Heyman Propp, Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins, and Robert Soros and Jamie Singer Soros.

## About Diane Severin Nguyen

Diane Severin Nguyen (American, b. 1990) is an artist who uses photography and time-based media. Her photography hybridizes the organic and the synthetic into amalgam sculptures, held together by the parameters of a photographic moment, and her video work expands that moment into a layered cultural and historical context in which language is collapsed into bodies. She currently lives and works between Los Angeles and New York. Nguyen earned an MFA from Bard College in 2020 and a BA from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2013. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include *Between Two Solitudes*, Stereo, Warsaw; *Tyrant Star* (online exhibition), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; *Reoccurring Afterlife*, Empty Gallery, Hong

Kong; *Minor twin worlds*, with Brandon Ndife, Bureau, New York; *Dead Slow*, with Julien Monnerie, Exo Exo, Paris; and *Flesh Before Body*, Bad Reputation, Los Angeles; all 2019. Nguyen's latest video, *Tyrant Star* (2019) was screened in the Shorts Program at the 57th New York Film Festival; the Yebisu Festival, Tokyo; and IFFR, Rotterdam. Recent group exhibitions include *Made in L.A. 2020: a version*, Hammer Museum and The Huntington, Los Angeles, 2020-2021; and *Bodies of Water*: 13th Shanghai Biennale, Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China, 2021.

#### 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 kunsthallen. 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.

